

NATIONAL DRAMA WEEK, FEBRUARY 8 THROUGH 14

DRAMATICS

The Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

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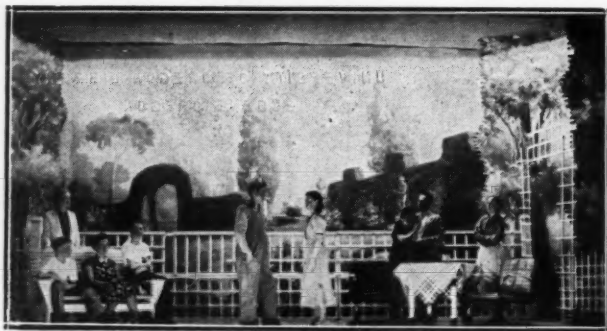
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NOTES AND by the EDITOR FOOTNOTES

A call for the educational press and organizations to intensify their efforts in behalf of peace is contained in the following resolution recently passed by unanimous vote of the United Nations General Assembly:

"The United Nations: (1) Condemns all forms of propaganda, in whatsoever country conducted, which is either designed or likely to provoke or encourage any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression. (2) Requests the government of each member to take appropriate steps within its constitutional limitations: (A) To promote, by all means of publicity and propaganda available to them, friendly relations among nations based upon the purposes and principles of the Charter; (B) To encourage the dissemination of all information designed to give expression to the undoubted desire of all peoples for peace."

We suggest that dramatics groups in the secondary schools use this important resolution as the basis for an assembly program, condemning war propaganda and hysteria, and upholding the need of promoting friendly relations and understanding among nations.

Professor of Education C. B. Mendenhall of the Ohio State University set out to discover through personal interviews with housewives, clerks, professional people, laborers and others,

what they thought the schools should teach. The majority replied: "Train my kids how to live in a democracy — how to get along with other people and the world, and to face the problems they'll have to face in life." Next to teaching youngsters how to be good neighbors and good citizens, the largest number of persons quizzed wanted SCHOOLS TO TEACH CULTURAL VALUES AND BROADENING SUBJECTS TO WIDEN STUDENTS' HORIZONS AND PROVIDE A RICHER ADULT LIFE. What better reasons can one offer for the teaching of dramatic arts in all our schools to all our children? What other activity offers more than participation in dramatic work in teaching students how to get along with others, in broadening the cultural horizon of our youth?

Television has been introduced as a permanent part of the regular school program of the Nutley, New Jersey, High School. A large screen-direct-view receiver, specially designed for school use, was presented to the Nutley Board of Education by a local manufacturer, Industrial Television, Inc.

To the Washington Irving High School, New York City, goes the honor of being the first to have its auditorium used for a television broadcast.

National Drama Week will be observed this season February 8 through 14. We cannot over-emphasize the importance of this event to educational theatre groups. National Drama Week is celebrated for the purpose of focusing public attention upon the many contributions which the drama makes to our national life. It also provides unique opportunities for drama groups to inform the community of the many contributions they are making to the educational and cultural program of the school. (A list of suggested activities for the observance of National Drama Week may be obtained from The National Thespian Society, College Hill Station, Cincinnati 24, Ohio. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)

Last August, a number of theatre experts interested in the development of the educational theatre in Great Britain held a conference in London at which time a statement broadly indicating the aims and practices of educational theatre groups was drafted. The statement was published in the fall issue of THEATRE IN EDUCATION, a magazine published at 77 Dean St., London. Those who are genuinely interested in the progress of the educational theatre in America will do well to obtain a copy of the statement. It contains much that applies to school theatres in the United States.

"The aim of all classroom dramatic activity should be to lead the pupils, step by step, through progressive stages, from the simplest forms of 'let's pretend' to the beginning of an appreciation and wider conception of drama and the art of the theatre, and some perception of its function in their own lives and in the life of the community." Quoted from the fall issue of THEATRE IN EDUCATION mentioned above.

Are you conducting any special project in dramatics within your high school or college, or among a number of schools or colleges, that is of interest and value to other dramatics directors? If so, we shall be happy to hear from you. We welcome articles which serve to advance the educational theatre.

A directory of leading drama festivals and contests scheduled for this spring in the United States, will appear in the March issue of this magazine.

A New Choric Pageant

UNTO US THE LIVING

By Harold B. Sliker, author of
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THE 1947 Lillian Fairchild Memorial Prize of \$100, given annually for creative art by the University of Rochester, was awarded to Mr. Sliker for *Unto Us the Living*.

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Arthur Miller

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library, New York, N. Y.

WHEN the New York Drama Circle presented its annual award on the 21st of April, 1947, to *All My Sons*, "because of the frank and uncompromising presentation of a timely and important theme; because of the honesty of the writing and the accumulative power of the scenes; and because it reveals a genuine instinct for the theatre in an intelligent and thoughtful new playwright," a new figure was established in the forefront of contemporary dramatists. Too many of us are apt to think, upon such occasion, that a new young artist has suddenly catapulted into prominence. We are eager to indulge in the universal enjoyment of a story of quick and easy success, and to overlook all of the toil and hardship that might have been expended in the struggle. Arthur Miller, the winner of the aforementioned award, had been working for such recognition for some time. It is because of all this work that this award will be only the touchstone of a brilliant career and not the conclusive crowning of a single achievement.

Arthur Miller was born in New York City in 1915. His family moved from uptown Manhattan to Brooklyn when the boy was thirteen, and Arthur attended the Abraham Lincoln High School. It was while attending classes at the University of Michigan that he began to exhibit an interest in playwriting. The exact number of experiments which preceded *THEY TOO ARISE* is not known; but this winner of the Avery Hopwood Award in 1936 was not a first effort.

Under the direction of Kenneth Rowe, the assistant professor of English at the University, considerable stress was placed upon dramaturgy. In 1937, of 225 manuscripts submitted in the first competition of the Bureau of New Plays (of which more anon), University of Michigan students were responsible for eleven. Mr. Miller's play, which was presented at Ann Arbor for three performances during March, 1937, was optioned by the Theatre Guild through the aforementioned Bureau of New Plays. *They Too Arise* shows most positively the antecedents of *All My Sons*, and bears certain signs of the influence of the writers of the plays of "social significance" of the early thirties (to revive a very popular phrase of that period). The plot details the economic struggles of a middle class Jewish cloak and suit manufacturer who is caught between the just demands of his personnel and the crushing opposition of his larger competitors. When Ben, one of the manufacturer's sons, announces: "I can see like a business man the day will come when all the people like us will rise with a roar and take away what

belongs to them and the workers of the world," he is echoing a sentiment that was being expressed by most of the younger dramatists of those immediately pre-World War II years. The younger son is a character very like the idealistic boy of Clifford Odet's *Awake and Sing*, and the grandfather almost an exact replica of the elderly sage of the earlier play. *They Too Arise*, however, exhibited vitality, a feeling of the dramatist's having something to say and an ability to say it in theatrically effective terms.

The Bureau of New Plays was founded in 1936, and was financially supported by seven of the major motion picture companies. Miss Theresa Helburn, then as now, one of the directors of the Theatre Guild, seems to have been the individual most active in its destiny. In 1937, the year Arthur Miller won the award, the advisory council of the Bureau listed among its members the aforementioned Mr. Rowe, Prof. Walter Prichard Eaton of Yale and the late Prof. Frederick H. Koch of the University of North Carolina. Awards were given for promising new material in several branches of dramaturgy. Mr. Miller's play was a winner in the "social group", and gained for him a scholarship valued at \$1250. A similar award in the same group was bestowed that year upon Norman Rosten of Brooklyn College, who has since distinguished

himself in the field of radio drama. Not too long after this, the Bureau of New Plays became bogged down in disputes with the Authors' League and other writers' organizations over payments of royalties, dramatists' rights and other details mainly of an economic nature.

The only other record I have discovered of Mr. Miller's days at Ann Arbor, is a program of a production of Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII* during March and April of 1937. Arthur Miller enacted the role of the Bishop of Rochester under the direction of Valentine B. Windt. It is through experience of this kind that a young playwright acquires genuine knowledge of the theatre and of his craft. The record states, also, that *They Too Arise* had been slated for production by the Federal Theatre at Littman's Theatre in Detroit, but no data further substantiates such a presentation.

After leaving the University, Mr. Miller returned to Brooklyn with his bride, the former Mary Slattery. He did some work for radio, but devoted most of his time to writing for the theatre. On the 9th of November, 1944, his first play to achieve actual professional production opened at the Playhouse, Wilmington, Delaware. It was *The Man Who Had All The Luck* which, after a few additional try-out performances at Philadelphia's Walnut Street Theatre, opened at the Forrest, New York, on November 23rd, 1944. The play was, overtly, an



Scene from the Broadway production of Arthur Miller's *ALL MY SONS*. Left to right: Arthur Kenney, Lois Wheeler, Beth Merrill.

attempt to offer the theatregoer an escape from the problems of the war. It was not at all the type of thing this young writer had done in his student days at Michigan, nor was it the type of thing with which he has more recently won fame. Irene Kittle, reviewing the play for CUE, tells us that the play was about "a young man who gets one break after another to such an extent that he begins to wonder when the blow will fall." Most of the reviewers admitted that it offered a change from the war plays which had been flooding the theatre, but that it was far from being a major dramatic work. Arthur Pollock writing for Mr. Miller's home borough newspaper, the BROOKLYN DAILY EAGLE, remarked: "At any rate, the author does not yet know how to make himself articulate in the theatre. When he has written enough plays to know how, he ought to be good." In spite of a cast which included Karl Swenson, Engenia Rawls, Herbert Berghof, Agnes Scott Yost and Forrest Orr under the direction of Joseph Fields, the play closed two days later after only four performances.

The failure, however, could not have discouraged the playwright too greatly for he kept right on at his job. He must have been gifted with assurance of his own capabilities and the confidence of others, for so overwhelming a defeat is a very great blow. During this year, he had written some historical plays for the Cavalcade of America broadcasts. These, plus the recommendation of the theatrical producer, Herman Shumlin, secured for Miller an assignment from Lester Cowan productions to collect materials for the film, THE STORY OF G. I. JOE. This was the 1945 release, which told of the World War II exploits of the late Ernie Pyle. Miller traveled from Camp Dix, the large eastern reception center through many of the training camps and officer candidate schools gathering data for the film. A collection of his impressions were published in December, 1944, by Revnal and Hitchcock in a volume entitled, SITUATION NORMAL. Russell Maloney in the NEW YORK TIMES of the 24th December, 1944, rather caustically notes: "It seems that the studio about to go into production with a story called G. I. JOE, suddenly had qualms about perpetuating the clichés of earlier war films: the tough sergeant, the cocky recruit and all the other familiar figures. Mr. Miller was provided with credentials and sent on a quick tour of some Army training camps. As nearly as I can figure it out, his mission was to find some new clichés to replace the old ones. If that is so, he has succeeded. Mr. Miller is at his best — and that is really good — when he is describing actual happenings rather than talking ideas or impressions."

I quote at this length for I feel that Mr. Maloney's comments are apt to throw considerable light on our subject's progress and accomplishment at this time. Are not the descriptions of actual happenings upon which the reviewer is complimenting Mr. Miller those very things which are so necessary a part of the equipment of a competent playwright? The actual notes must have been merely absorbed into the screen treatment for the film, for Arthur Miller's name does not appear among those credited for writing *The Story of G. I. Joe*. The experiences, nevertheless, must

have been of value and the publication of the book added to his ever-growing reputation.

His first real fame, however, came in November, 1945, with the publication of *Focus*. This was a novel about anti-Semitism in the United States, and one which occasioned wide discussion. Coming, as it did, at the conclusion of a long struggle against such pressures abroad, readers were particularly conscious of such evils here at home. The book was written with sensitiveness and, at times, in white heat. It exhibits a very definite knowledge and control of dramatic effect. In spite of his success with the novel, Mr. Miller always kept his eye toward theatrical production. The very week of the publication of *Focus*, his adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* was enacted by Ioan Fontaine on a Theatre Guild On-The-Air Broadcast. Earlier that season, Lynn Fontanne and Alfred Lunt had broadcast his adaptation of Ferenc Molnar's *The Guardsman* under the same auspices.

Over one year was to elapse, however, before final success came to him. The time factor, if nothing else, gives some idea of what it takes in an individual to establish himself as a dramatist in our contemporary theatre. The play was first announced as THE SIGN OF THE ARCHER, and was held by Herbert H. Harris, who had produced the earlier attempt. Mr. Harris must certainly have had confidence in the playwright's talents. Late in 1946, Harold Clurman and Elia Kazan (two of the stalwarts of the old Group Theatre)

formed a producing association with Walter Fried, who had gained considerable theatre experience as General Manager for Oscar Serlin. The new firm, together with Mr. Harris, expressed interest in Mr. Miller's new play and set about producing it.

Under the direction of Kazan, one of the most astute of our directors, and with a cast which included: Beth Merrill, Ed Begley, Lois Wheeler, J. Arthur Kennedy — the play opened at the Shubert Theatre in New Haven, Connecticut, on the 9th of January, 1947. By this time the title had changed to *All My Sons*, and as such it opened in New York at the same theatre which had housed *The Man Who Had All The Luck* in 1944 — now called the Coronet on the 29th of the same month. The critics at once expressed the approval of the work which was made more manifest with their award three months later.

It would be pointless to claim that ALL MY SONS is a flawless bit of dramaturgy — nor are such claims expected. My own disappointment of the play stems from the fact that Mr. Miller has tried to present too large a picture of society today on a single stage. All of the evils Mr. Miller so depicts do exist, but dramatic emphasis requires that in a single work selectivity and highlighting must be used. Nevertheless, it would be even more pointless not to hail Mr. Miller as a most interesting new voice in the theatre, and one who has something to say and knows many interesting ways to say it. Elliot Norton catches just the right note in his review for the BOSTON POST of January 15th, 1947: "For although he fools dangerously with the tricks of the trade, he has a precocious knowledge of human nature and the gift of showing it in action, under stress. Here, in what amounts to a first try, he has come close to true tragedy, and if his final product is melodrama instead, count it a good one."

Various reports have reached us concerning Arthur Miller's next work. One is to the effect that he is at work upon a novel based on the question of "what happens when a man does an evil thing knowing it is evil but with a laudatory aim in view." The NEW YORK TIMES of July 22nd, 1947, tells us: "Mr. Miller's next play, by the way, is now described as a comedy, set on the lower East Side in the twenties, and involving an Italian-American worker. It is called *Plenty Good Time*." Those of us who are more attached to the theatre than to the other art form, hope that the latter report is true.

Meanwhile, *All My Sons* continues as one of the few serious plays to survive the slack summer season in the New York theatre. It has recently been acquired by the United States Army for production in Germany. Helena Thimig, the widow of Max Reinhardt, is to star in the production which will play in several of the large German-speaking centers, including Berlin, Vienna and Basle. Paris and Stockholm also hope to see productions of the play. The play's theme is one of universal pertinence. It's several productions clearly indicate that Arthur Miller is one of the American theatre's most widely heard voices.

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DRAMATICS MAGAZINE

Impressionism

The Fourth of a Series of Articles on Styles of Scene Design

By RICHARD CORSON

New York, N. Y.

IMPRESSIONISM is one of the most interesting and useful of the modern styles in stage design. It is the simplification of realism through the elimination of non-essentials, usually with the intent of creating or heightening a mood. Whereas expressionism is primarily intellectual in concept and in effect, impressionism is emotional. The designer tries to give the basic feeling of a scene without including every detail which would have to be included in a realistic representation of the same setting. The designer must usually be more imaginative in his execution of the setting, and the audience is given the opportunity of using its imagination to a much greater extent than with realism.

Frequently impressionistic settings are used in an effort to simplify staging. When this is skillfully done, the result is likely to be more successful than a completely realistic setting would be. The imaginative designer uses impressionism to gain such added effectiveness by concentrating on important elements and minimizing unimportant ones.

Actually, in the illustrated sets for *Tobias and the Angel* it would have been simpler to use standard flats and a realistic treatment, for all pieces for these impressionistic sets had to be built for the one show, then discarded. Also, problems of masking, bracing, and handling were somewhat greater than usual. But it seemed at the time that much of the effectiveness of the show depended on some such treatment of the settings.

Both of the sets shown are impressionistic, yet observe the difference in feeling or mood. The first suggests the poverty and simple life of old Tobit, while the second the opulence of Raguel, but also to some extent the fantasy of the evil demon who has a habit of killing Sara's husband each time she marries.

Both line and color enter into the creation of such feelings in the set. In the photographs of the *TOBIAS* sets, the contrast in line is apparent. Irregular outlines (soft, however, rather than sharp) characterize the first set. And they seem to reach in and enclose the actors in a small space. The lines of the other set, however, are graceful curves, sharply defined. They seem to spread out. The unrealistic treatment is in keeping with the fanciful element of the jealous demon who is in love with Sara. Colors in the first set were dark and brownish. In the other they were light-eggshell, coral, aqua, etc., with touches of gold.

Since the realistic elements in these sets were not only simplified but also deliberately exaggerated for effect, the style technically should be referred to

as stylized impressionism. The majority of impressionistic sets on Broadway in the last year or two have been stylized. So have many of the non-professional sets appearing on the pages of theatre magazines. It is quite logical that they should be. After all, as long as one is abandoning realism for something else, one may as well go a step further and do everything possible to work on both the emotions and the esthetic sensitivity of the observer. And that is precisely what any form of stylization does.

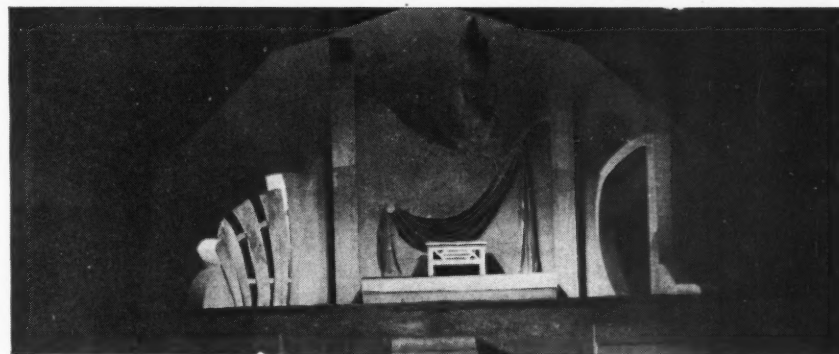
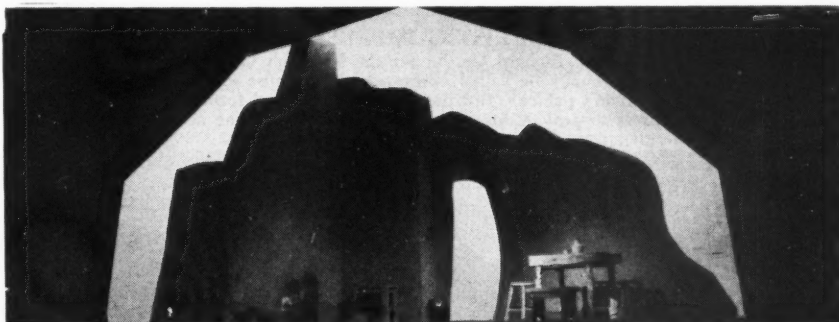
Impressionistic settings need not be stylized, however. Very often in connection with space staging they are not. We have discussed space staging previously as one kind of formalism. As you will recall, it involves picking actors out of a black void with directional light. If you are doing a realistic play, you may want to use the same technique but use a few realistic pieces, perhaps even the section of a set with partial walls. This is an effective means of doing a show with rapidly shifting scenes. All of the scenes (or some of them, at least) can be set on the stage all at once. Then they are picked out with light. Perhaps for some scenes you will need some furniture and props and for others nothing but the actors appearing out of the blackness. Probably you will want

to use levels in connection with the realistic pieces. If the technique of the formal stage is combined with impressionistic technique, you have formalistic impressionism or impressionistic formalism, depending on which predominated.

It is possible, of course, even with space staging, to stylize the pieces, but ordinarily that is not done, probably because the mood created by the use of light and the superecedence of light and shade over line tend to throw any actual setting into the background.

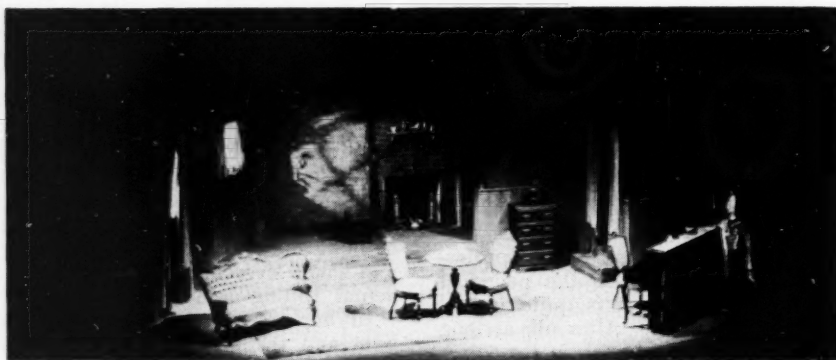
In impressionism in its purest form light and shade (or mass, if you want to consider it from that point of view) are somewhat more important than line. After all, blacking out non-essentials is a simple and effective way of eliminating them, which is precisely what is done in space staging. Important elements are emphasized with light. That, of course, is a step beyond the elimination of non-essentials in the setting itself, which is usually static for any one scene. Light introduces the element of constant change for emphasis — or, more accurately, the possibility for such change.

The *Ladies in Retirement* set shown on the next page is impressionistic. Only partial walls were used, and the set was a small one set in the center of a large stage. The wall stopped immediately above the door right stage and tapered down to a much lower point left stage. The flat with the oven door was the



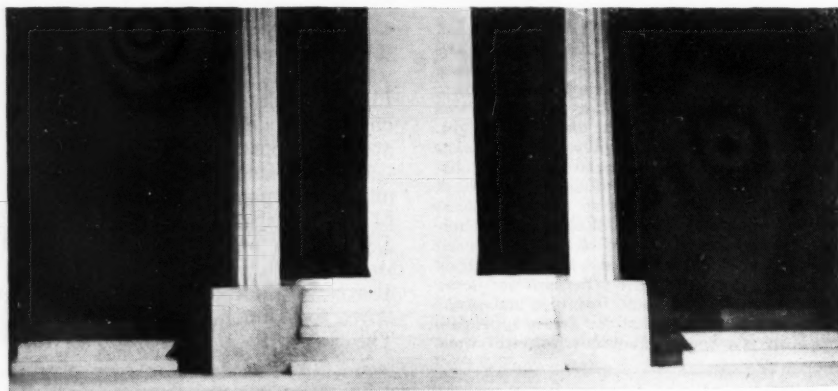
STYLIZED IMPRESSIONISM

Two settings for *TOBIAS AND THE ANGEL* by Richard Corson for the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina. The top one is the hut in Ninevah. Below is Raguel's garden in Ecbatana. Elements are basically realistic, but they are simplified to include only the essentials, even to the extent of cutting away much of the wall in the hut scene. But in both sets the decorative line is stylized rather than realistic, especially in the garden set. All sets for the show were designed as a central decorative unit to be fitted into the general design of the false proscenium — hence the stylization.



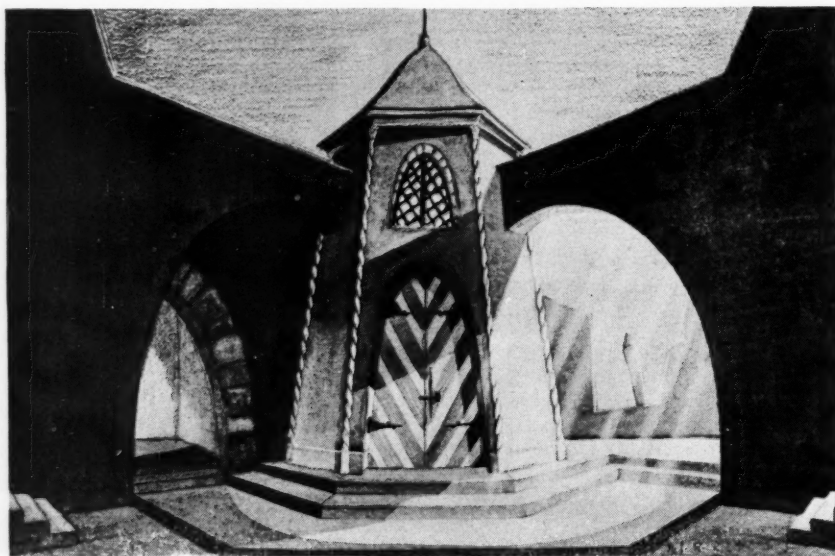
IMPRESSIONISM

Setting for *LADIES IN RETIREMENT* by Richard Corson for the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina. In the photograph the setting looks fairly realistic, but actually it was a compact unit consisting of partial walls and a minimum of detail set in the center of a large stage with a black velour cyc. The simplification in this case comes largely through the quantity of scenery rather than the style of the component parts.



FORMALISTIC IMPRESSIONISM

Setting for *ANTIGONE* by Richard Corson for the Woman's College of the University of North Carolina. The set may be called impressionistic because it is an extreme simplification of the front of Creon's palace. But the levels are arranged formalistically, not so much to suggest real steps as to provide interesting working levels for the actors.



STYLIZED FORMALISTIC IMPRESSIONISM

Sketch for *OTHELLO* by Robert J. Wade for the Emerson Drama Workshop. This is an unusually clever scheme for setting the play simply and with a minimum of scene changes. It is formalistic in that non-representative levels and steps are provided to give variety to the picturization, yet the general effect is definitely representational—rather realistic in form but simplified to fit into the general design. The stylization comes from the decorative treatment of the whole. The numerous possibilities for simple changes in the basic set and for using it without changes for many scenes are obvious. For all directors and designers producing Shakespeare, it is worthy of very careful study.

tallest and was vaguely chimney-shaped. Directional lighting and a black velour cyc rendered the top part of the set inconspicuous and concentrated attention on the action and on the important elements of the setting—the brick oven, the window, the stair door, etc. In addition, it helped give an effect of being "closed in" and apart from the rest of the world. The walls, doors, windows, furniture, etc., were treated as realistically as if the setting had been complete. It was a simplification for the purpose of heightening a mood. It was actually less simple, from a practical point of view, than a complete set. Although less material was used, all pieces had to be especially built, and nearly all had to have thicknesses. In addition, there was the problem of concealing lighting equipment and entrances from the balcony. On the other hand, such a set is easily adaptable to many stages of varying sizes. This particular one was used successfully not only on the large stage for which it was built, but also on tiny army stages.

IMPRESSIONISM is extremely useful in staging many classical plays, particularly Shakespeare's and nearly all plays involving many scene changes. Combined with formalism it becomes a very practical solution to many difficult problems. Lee Simonson's famous sets for *Marco Millions* utilized a formal unit set with three openings, which were plugged or used as either entrances or openings behind which simple pieces were set. This formalistic impressionism utilizing a unit set is one of the best solutions to the scenic problem of a theatre with a small stage and limited budget or for a theatre of any size when numerous scene changes are required.

Of the various ramifications of the impressionistic style, stylized impressionism is currently the most popular on Broadway. It came into prominence several years ago and has been widely used ever since, especially for musicals. Set pieces and backdrops are used, both painted in a style appropriate to the show. That is, the set pieces are usually basically realistic in form, and the backdrops have the usual sky and clouds and distance landscapes. But the treatment of the elements is stylized, just as Grant Wood's paintings are stylized treatments of realistic elements. The impressionism comes from the fact that only essential elements are usually used, which is almost a necessity in a musical, for space is at a premium.

Sometimes, however, the element of simplification seems to be missing, and the style becomes stylized theatricalism, which will be discussed in a later article.

Settings for *DARK OF THE MOON* on Broadway were impressionistic. The sets for the original production at the University of Iowa, designed by John Boyt and A. S. Gillette, would be quite clearly stylized impressionism, and, it seems to me, were much more

The Wisconsin Idea Theatre

By JUNIUS EDDY

Editor, *The Wisconsin Idea Theatre Quarterly*, University of Wisconsin,
Madison, Wisconsin

OUT in the state of Wisconsin, people from all walks of life have recently become aware of a new program in drama that may set the pattern for a fresh approach to the much-discussed "national theatre". Quietly, without any fuss or fanfare, a group of young men has been at work for over a year now on a new project designed to make the theatre a part of the everyday life of the people. There have been no imposing articles about it in THEATRE ARTS, and no items concerning it have appeared in the Sunday New York TIMES or TRIBUNE drama sections. Its influence, however, is beginning to be felt in every corner of the state by housewives, high school and college students, little theatre groups, and by religious, industrial, and professional people.

Centering on the University campus at Madison and spreading from the Illinois line to Lake Superior, the new project has been named The Wisconsin Idea Theatre. It is sponsored by three

departments of the University — the Colleges of Letters and Science, and of Agriculture, and the Extension Division — where departmental lines have been cut across and many new facilities opened up to clear the way.

The name itself was carefully chosen. It is based on a famous Wisconsin watch-word whose associations have more than incidental meaning to the folk of the state. The original "Wisconsin Idea", as formulated by educators and statesmen, was founded on a general program of improvement for the State and a full utilization of the State's resources, accomplished largely through governmental methods. It developed outstanding leadership in many fields of endeavor, including farming, invention, architecture, and politics. In the educational sense, it has, of course, continued to exemplify President Van Hise's statement that "The boundaries of the campus are the boundaries of the State." Something of all this was in the minds of the men who planned and developed the "Wisconsin Idea" Theatre: it was their belief that the "Wisconsin Idea" should now begin to penetrate further the whole field of the cultural arts, with particular emphasis on interpretation and shaping of the region through drama and the theatre.

effective than those on Broadway. Impressionism, remember, involves only selection. Stylization involves, in addition, adaptation and development. For a fantasy, such as DARK OF THE MOON, that additional element of stylization seems to offer many possibilities that would be (and were, in fact) missed in a purely impressionistic set.

In thinking of your own settings, keep impressionism in mind as one of the most useful and esthetically satisfying of the modern styles. And remember

its variations through combinations with stylization, formalism, and theatricalism. But whichever style you choose, be sure it is appropriate to the play. Some plays (such as *Craig's Wife*) seem to require one very definite style of set; others (such as *Peer Gynt*) have many possibilities. Choose carefully, but do not be afraid to experiment with the unusual. Better an interesting failure than a dull success.



IMPRESSIONISM

Setting for LILIOM by Robert J. Wade for the Emerson Drama Workshop. An extremely effective example of setting a stage simply with only the suggestion of locale through skillful use of light and shade and a single representative prop. This is a particularly effective style for poetic drama and serious fantasy.

Recently, as a prelude to dramatic activity during Wisconsin's Centennial celebration in 1948, a state-wide play-writing contest for stage and radio was sponsored jointly by the Wisconsin Idea Theatre and the Wisconsin Centennial Committee and offered nearly \$1,000 as prizes for the best scripts submitted on a Wisconsin theme, past or present, by Wisconsin residents. The contest closed on September 1st with a total of 89 new scripts submitted — 16 full-length plays, 39 one-act plays, and 34 half-hour radio dramas.

The best of the stage scripts will be produced throughout the State during the present year. Two and three-day drama festivals are now in the process of being set up in various sections of the State, with the State Teachers Colleges acting as hosts in the spring of 1948. The cream of the dramatic crop, unearthed at these festivals, will be taken to Milwaukee where, during the Centennial Exposition in August of 1948, they will be performed as part of the 23-day drama program of the State Fair Little Theatre.

THE man who is directing this project in socialized drama is a tall, easy-going Kansan, Professor Robert E. Gard. Lincolnesque in appearance and in humor, Bob Gard spent five years at Cornell working with professor A. M. Drummond on a New York State folk drama program. He came to Wisconsin following a year at the University of Alberta, Canada, where he directed a notable folklore and local history project for the Rockefeller Foundation. A Folklorist in approach and a playwright by profession, he brought to the new Wisconsin project an attitude which is considerably different from that on which most previous, so-called "regional drama" programs have been patterned.

His concept is based on the theory that true national stature in the arts means, first, a careful development of the materials and latent art-impulses of the people in each particular region. The new project is therefore founded in a basic study of the heritage, tradition and contemporary social forces that make up the Wisconsin scene. Many Wisconsin people are now at work throughout the State collecting these regional materials — accounts and stories from old newspapers, family diaries, packets of old letters stowed away in family trunks, old-timers' personal reminiscences, and from the complex welter of social forces which is modern history in the making. This material, much of it rarely examined, rarely used in dramatic form, is being sent in to the University where it is being selected and arranged for the use of writers.

The people who are interpreting these materials through drama are the ordinary men and women of Wisconsin. To date, some five hundred people have indicated their desire to learn more about the specialized craft of playwriting. Not all of them will become great playwrights, to be sure, but already a number

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of good, new stage and radio scripts have been received by Gard and his associates.

To carry out its deeper, social purposes, the Wisconsin Idea Theatre is now beginning to make these new scripts available — at no royalty cost — to the people of the state for production by drama groups in every locality. Most of Wisconsin's thirty-odd community and little theatre groups, its high school, college and rural dramatic organizations have agreed to produce these plays as fast as they become available. Ulti-

mately, Gard looks forward to the development of a State Traveling Theatre company which will tour the State, performing these plays on every possible stage and conducting workshops for practical training in all phases of the drama. He also envisions a State "Theatre Arts Center" as a home base for the project, belonging to the people themselves, with facilities for training and experiment in all of the related cultural arts.

The heart of the current program, however, lies in its hope of contributing toward the enrichment of the lives of ordinary people through the medium of drama, broadening their understanding of contemporary life, and interpreting Wisconsin's past and present as a part of the unfolding American scene. "By interpretation of scene," Gard will tell you, slowly, "we mean something deeper than 'America is apple pie, baseball games, or Joe, the kid who works at the corner gas station'. We mean sincere writers who will examine the particular materials of American regions, write honestly, with sympathy, about these regions and their relation to the whole of America and the world. We realize, of course, that the use of native materials alone does not create a national spirit. The materials must be assimilated and understood, and the plays — if they are to be of national significance — must be linked to the common experience of mankind."



ROBERT E. GARD
Director of the Wisconsin Idea Theatre

In ways such as these, the Wisconsin Idea Theatre is confident it is planting the seeds for something which may become truly "a people's theatre".

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Some Hints on Rehearsing Beginners

The Fourth of a Series of Articles on Rehearsal Techniques

By FRANK M. WHITING

Director, University of Minnesota Theatre, Minneapolis, Minn.

TO some, the most distressing, and to others the most gratifying thing about the fine arts is that they refuse to be standardized. The creative attitude seems so fundamental that any rigid formula, if slavishly followed, soon becomes trite and stifling. In the art of the theatre, as in all others, rules can never take the place of intelligence, imagination, and good judgment. Consequently, while the following article will be found to advocate the creative approach to directing, it must be made clear at the outset that the truly skillful and versatile director will often resort to other methods. Many a time I have seen some trick of the old mechanical system save the day when my favored "Stanislavski system" had failed. In dealing with actors one can never know too much. Even the best educated and resourceful director often exhausts his entire stock of methods and "tricks" in an effort to inject the spark of theatrical life into a particularly stubborn case.

But while admitting that all systems properly interpreted and applied have their values, it is not true that they are of equal merit, especially when dealing with new and inexperienced actors. Most of them are variations of two basic schools, the *mechanical* and the *creative*. If we think of acting in terms of stimulus response, then the creative school, perhaps best developed by Stanislavski, will be seen to concentrate on the stimulus, while the technical school, which reached its most elaborate development in Delsarte, concentrates on the response. The basic assumption of the creative school is that the actor can be made sufficiently sensitive to the implications of the imaginary situation, and to the drives and motives that would stimulate the character he is to portray, he will automatically sense what the character's response should be. The technical school, on the other hand, ignores stimulus and concentrates its attention on the mastery of standardized patterns of response. Both schools of thought have tried to support their views with psychological theory. While most of the reasoning has been of the armchair variety, the creative school seems to have fared much better, for it seems to harmonize with the basic concepts of both the Gestalt and Behavioristic schools, while the mechanical based its arguments on the James-Lange theory of emotions, which has lost most of the prestige it enjoyed twenty years ago. The creative approach has several very definite advantages:

1. It requires the student to create for himself. He must use his imagination. He cannot fall back on standardized patterns and clichés. One of the great attractions of a good amateur performance is the freshness and sincerity of the performance. This is hardly possible where the young player, rather than creating for himself, is required to follow the pattern of expression set down by a Delsarte or a textbook.

2. It opens the way for endless variation of expression. Directors who are always trying to pour everyone into a standardized mould should pause with horror when they realize what they would have done to a potential Will Rogers, Edna Mae Oliver, or Bob Hope. The true teacher must have a method so flexible that everyone can develop quite in his own way.

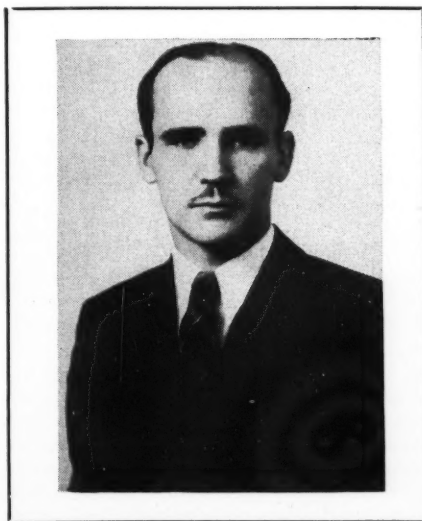
3. It is safe. Even if it fails to get results, it probably does no harm. The actor almost never learns anything he will have to unlearn. Unfortunately this is not true of the mechanical system where even the sound techniques are usually more than offset by stilted, artificial mannerisms that have caused many of the best professional, community and university directors to prefer candidates with no training whatever.

4. It is easier, faster, and more effective. The mechanical method is deceiving in this respect. At first, students are impressed because it seems definite. Simple fundamentals may soon be mastered, but the trouble is that life and even good modern plays do not stick to simple fundamentals. There are infinite complexities and variations that could only be mastered by years of mechanical practice. These complexities, however, may often be expressed almost immediately by the creative actor who concentrates his attention not on the mechanics of expression, but on the motives and stimulus that naturally call forth such expression.

Probably the majority of readers will, with a few reservations, agree with the above reasoning as far as theory is concerned. When faced with the high

pressure necessity of putting on a play—and a good one—under anything but ideal conditions, it is surprising to find how most of us resort to the old automatic, mechanical method. There was a time in my life when quite unconsciously I felt that the director's function was to see how many things he could find wrong with the play, then point these out to the players. Fortunately an old timer set me right with something like, "Let 'em (the actors) have their heads, boy. No one can get his mind on the play up there with you yappin' all the time." I realize now that he opened my eyes to a great truth. Any fool can watch an average rehearsal and fill many pages with little notations of things that are wrong. It often requires a genius, however, to decide which notations should be mentioned, which ignored, and which lumped together around some basic principle. Generally, such notes should be looked upon as symptoms. The challenge lies in the diagnosis of these symptoms, the discovery of the cause and the prescription of the remedy. If the director has made the mistake of choosing a leading lady who resembles a cow rather than a gazelle, it is probably best to suffer in silence. Calling direct attention to her bovine characteristics may simply replace the cow with a hippopotamus, or worse still with a freakish cross between the three that has nothing in common with anything except one of the monstrosities not infrequently seen upon the amateur stage. In other words, never make an actor self-conscious about a defect unless you are reasonably certain you can also cure it. This is especially important if the difficulty is one that grows out of nervousness and unnecessary muscle tension. Most bad voices—those of the tense, badly placed, breathy variety—spring from this cause. Simply calling attention to the defect will only increase the strain and consequently aggravate the trouble.

Take another common example, the reading of lines. Most directors have gone through the maddening experience of trying to improve the reading of a single phrase or sentence only to have the actor grow confused and sound worse than ever. They have also listened to the monotonous rhythm of sreeches that all sound alike—where the actor hears his cue, begins his speech, gradually accumulates a little energy, then tapers off as the end approaches. Stopping to work on each speech will only aggravate the difficulty, because the harder one works the more he has a tendency to focus attention upon the single speech which, as a result, acquires a beginning, a middle, and an end, whereas his attention should focus upon a purpose which would tie the present speech to the one before, the ones that follow, and also to the things said and done by the other actors in the scene. In life, an entire series of speeches is



Professor Frank M. Whiting

usually tied together around such a unifying purpose, each individual speech being only a step toward the goal. The speaker uses first one idea, then another, until he believes his purpose has been accomplished. In such a process the communication of "the thing meant" is what counts, and the words, the phrases, and the sentences that he employs are important only insofar as they contribute to that end. Realizing this, the wise director will throw his emphasis on motive and purpose rather than on the individual inflections.

To illustrate, one of the most effective bits of directing that it has ever been my good fortune to execute, came during a rehearsal of Drinkwater's ABRAHAM LINCOLN. We were already in the last week, and the cabinet scene at the outbreak of the Civil War was still lifeless and unconvincing. I listened to the scene with more than usual anxiety and, as in the past, filled several pages with notes of specific errors. Fortunately, I never used them. The scene was so bad that I finally gave up and began asking myself, "What is behind this? What is lacking?" At the end of the scene I stopped the show, discarded my notes, and launched into a brief pep talk. Theatrically speaking, I was lucky. Pearl Harbor was only three months behind us and the memory of the tension and anxiety of those hours when the bombs first began to fall was fresh and vivid. Strangely enough, everyone had been so busy trying "to act" that he had never stopped to realize that the crisis facing Lincoln and his cabinet at the outbreak of the Civil War was only an intensification of Pearl Harbor. This mass application of memory of recall served to motivate the entire scene. Other things were added that probably helped, among them a distant military band and crowd noises, but the numerous specific errors were never mentioned. We tried the scene again and the difference was one of the most amazing things I have ever experienced in the theatre, for, not only the lines I had previously noted, but almost every line in the scene took on life and meaning.

Another and closely related principle of good criticism for beginners is "accentuate the positive." Eliminate the things that should not be done by concentrating attention on the things that should be done. Expression, not repression, should be the keynote. Take the common fault of many a raw amateur, the habit of swinging back and forth. One of the worst things the director can do is to say, "don't swing," "hold still," "you make me nervous," etc. Ordinarily, the advice either fails to produce any effect whatever, or the victim literally *holds* himself still. He does not relax and fall into the easy, poised attitude that the director intended. He simply blocks already tense muscles with others equally tense, with the result that he becomes more strained and forced than ever. The safest cure for most such cases is to use action. Give the self-conscious adolescent meaningful, lifelike things to do and you will be surprised to see how quickly the unnecessary tensions and random movements disappear. In cases where physical action is not possible, the positive approach should still be maintained by emphasis on purpose. An actor intent on hearing what others say, or in spying

on a pair of lovers, will exhibit but slight tendencies to fidget or swing back and forth. In other words, make the imaginary situation vivid and the sensitive beginner will exhibit a muscle pattern characteristic of the situation and in keeping with that of the character he is portraying. Make the real situation (that of putting on an amateur play) vivid and the sensitive beginner will likewise exhibit the embarrassed random activity pattern characteristic of that unhappy situation. What the untrained beginner thinks and feels is very likely to translate itself into overt expression.

Lest the reader misunderstand, I should emphasize that not all detailed criticism is to be avoided. General principles and motives are often best illustrated by specific instances. Mentioning positive examples of failure to see, to hear, to feel, to taste, or to think with pantomimic effectiveness is usually very helpful. Even the old well worn admonition, "Keep up the end of your lines," never seems to inhibit anyone. Nor should anyone get the impression that the director using the creative method should be timid or afraid to make suggestions. Most of the best directors are very healthy, red-blooded individuals with vitality, ideas, and a gift for constructive criticism—criticism aimed at the CAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTY, NOT ITS EFFECT, criticism that stimulates the young actor to more and more awareness of the character's thoughts and feelings, but less and less of his own.

Such a director can usually be counted upon to make his actors appear talented, which I have come to believe is the primary function of the school director. Of all the abused concepts that plague the theatre, "talent" is perhaps the worst. It is usually the excuse behind the inadequate teacher hides. Through vicious and personal criticism, such a teacher ties the sensitive beginner in knots, then escapes all responsibility by dismissing his as having no talent. There are undoubtedly hundreds of teachers thoroughly convinced of their own greatness who have never yet succeeded in finding a "talented" actor—at least one talented enough to withstand the destructive power of their teaching. There are others who, no matter how small the school or how small the tryout, invariably come up with a good cast. I once heard a critic judge remark after a tiny western school had just succeeded for the second consecutive year in winning first or second place in the finals of the state one act play contest, "The students from _____ are not well trained, but they have such talent!" She clearly meant to imply that the teacher was only second rate, but the students outstanding, yet significantly enough it was during the two years that that particular teacher was there that the "talented" students made their appearance. So far as I have been able to learn, in no other year did the same school even approach the state finals. A teacher such as the critic judge in question invariably looks upon such qualities as spontaneity, imagination, characterization, and the convincing illusion of

reality as being God-given, fixed qualities, as constituting that mysterious thing called "talent" which all textbooks seem to imply that the actor must have, since it cannot be taught. "Training" she thinks of in terms of a few techniques, voice placement, pronunciation, stance, stage diction, and a few of the more conventional features of stage business.

Some object by saying that the creative method is vague, inspirational, and difficult to handle. There may be slight truth in this but at least it is never trite, standardized, or made up of stilted posturing and unimaginative clichés. An understanding of the method (plus a liberal sprinkling of Gestalt psychology) makes it easy to comprehend why some people act well almost from the first, why almost all other "normal" beings can act with reasonable effectiveness, although the director may suffer some distressing moments before he finds the key that will unlock the storehouse of histrionic potentials. I saw a student director turn the trick a few years ago by putting a sweet, self-conscious young thing in a melodrama where she played a scene opposite a former professional actor as the villain. The technique used by the director was simple. He said very little to the "young thing" but dimmed the lights, turned on the howling wind, and secretly told the villain to give her the works! About the third time through her sweet self-consciousness got lost somewhere in the excitement and she became the terrified, pathetic urchin that the author had intended. Try the system sometime. It is a system seldom appreciated, yet all of us can recall how much easier it is to laugh if the actors around us are capable of bursting forth with spontaneous glee, how much easier it is to make tragedy convincing if the others have already caught the quiet hush of death, how much easier it is to sound conversational if the actor playing opposite seems alert to everything we say and tosses his own ideas back with such conviction that we feel a natural urge to reply.

What I have said is in no way intended as a complete resumé of my theory of conducting rehearsals. I have tried to emphasize only one aspect of the director's problem. I have said nothing—at least nothing very constructive—about technique or polishing, because they should come later. I seriously doubt the economy of spending long hours in polishing until you have something sufficiently interesting to merit the trouble. Generally speaking, my idea of the difference between the good high school play and the good professional play is about the same as my idea of the difference between the good high school football team and the good professional outfit. The latter should excel in maturity, technique, and polish, the former in sincerity, team work, and enthusiasm. From an audience point of view, it is hard to say which is the more enjoyable. In the hands of the right director, the high school play, even in a small town, can be a thoroughly stimulating and exciting achievement in both art and entertainment. Middle age and old age have no monopoly on the imagination, team work, and the creative enthusiasm that go into the production of a good play.



Scene from Ibsen's *A Doll's House* designed and directed by Madge Skelly at the Cedar Crest College, Allentown, Pa.

Ibsen for the Small Stage

By MADGE SKELLY

Department of Dramatic Arts, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.

IBSEN'S plays are ideally suited to production on the small or handicapped stage. Their initial performances at Bergen were certainly much circumscribed in space; the stage there was about three paces by five, equalled in this country I believe only in Robert Alan Green's tiny Kilbuck Theatre in Pittsburgh, where he too has wrought some miracles of staging in confined areas.

Ibsen's plays are a good choice for the handicapped theatre in many ways: there are no finer exercises for actors, with the possible exception of Shakespeare's people, than the Norwegian's characters. To play them well the actor must learn depth of characterization, underplaying of emotion, infinite variety of voice and reading for the long speeches, the expression of many and varied feelings with little physical reaction. These plays demand a minimum of space, of set, of furniture, and for the financially limited, have the additional advantage that they require no royalty. Also, they provide values for the audience far in excess of those acquired by the reading of the play in book form.

When *A Doll's House* was announced for production at Cedar Crest College it was opposed in the early stages by the dramatists themselves, and greatly discouraged by our prospective audience. No one wanted Ibsen. He was "old-fashioned", "out of date", "difficult to do", etc. But in rehearsal the actors became fascinated by the intricacies of character, the needed realistic underplaying so contrasted to the graceful romantic acting of the previous production, *Twelfth Night*, and the stylized allegory of *He Who Gets Slapped*. They came unwillingly, many of them under compulsion of the English department's required attendance. They departed to recommend the performance enthusiastically to those who had not seen it.

Ghosts, several months later, fared better. The actors had by this time fully realized the meatiness of Ibsen's characters. Audiences are not as large nor as enthusiastic as for some other productions, but are growing in size and in appreciation of the beautiful acting necessary to these plays. There has been admission that Ibsen is not so dated, after all.

THE accompanying photographs of a simple sets for *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* illustrates a number of tricks for use on a small stage, to increase the apparent size, and greatly increase the usefulness of the practical playing space available. In both, the recessed multiple-entrance device is used. In *Ghosts* it is the hallway at stage right between the two posts. Here three sides of the recess are exits: the door upstage is the exterior main door of the house, opening presumably to the roadway or to a path to the roadway; the curtained french windows open into the greenhouse or conservatory, and the exit downstage opposite the front door of the house presumably leads to the dining room where Oswald and Regina uncork the wine together. At stage left the one exit serves a dual purpose: the stairs lead off upstage to the second floor of the house; the downstage exit is to the kitchen and rear of the house. With two small openings in the set, five separate directional exits are achieved. Ordinarily, the designer would state off-hand the complete impossibility of five exits on such minute stage (width sixteen feet, greatest depth on stage eight feet).

The same device is employed in *A Doll's House*. The centre arch at back has double doors at its stage right, opening into the hallway of the apartment house. The door upstage, just faintly discernible in the photograph, leads into Helmar's study, the left exit leads to the

remainder of the apartment. Variety of entrance and discretion result, with only one real opening in the set.

In both designs, only an angle of the room is on the stage in either case, allowing much more back stage room than the box permits. The sharply angled walls enable the designer to obtain for greater illusion for the imaginary room than is the case when a squarish box set is used. The audience in imagination may carry the angled walls into space toward themselves for any length. From out front a box set, on the contrary, always remains exactly the size one actually sees on the stage. Our modern audiences have been but too well trained to observe the convention of the fourth wall at the footlight line.

The angular set suggests to the director, by its very form, patterns of action (in movement of the actor about the stage) different from the too often repeated "cross right", "cross left" of the square set. In *Ghosts* Regina enters from down right (the dining room), moves downstage in a half circle to place a lamp on the down right table, crosses upstage left center and places a second lamp on pedestal, turns right up center with a flip of her skirt toward the window, kneels on sofa to close curtains, rises again, takes up lamp from pedestal, crosses to place it on table down left, and with another half circle up stage, exits down left to get the wine. This business executed in a box set is stiff, formal, full of ungraceful turns, and places the whole body of the actress in an awkward position at the closing of the window curtains.

In the triangular set, it enables Regina to execute a curved pattern of action almost like a free and easy hip swinging dance, with balanced figures to the right, to the left. The grace of the curved action pattern against the stiff angularity of the walls and formal furniture arrangement, definitely and softly places Regina as a character out of her element in this room and in conflict with the principles of conduct for which the room stands.

In both designs, the feeling of height proper to the room is increased by the use of low furniture, concentration of

light on definite playing areas, bright accents in furniture and costume against dark backgrounds. The walls for *A Doll's House* were a dark lavender gray, for *Ghosts* a very dark red with brown and purple tones. Bright vertical lines of the hall posts and bell pull in *Ghosts* faked additional height.

Period props are used both to decorate and to inspire business and atmosphere. In *Ghosts* the portrait on the wall up centre is Mr. Alving in court dress. Mrs. Alving, Pastor Manders, and Oswald all use it to motivate movement, and to illustrate lines. The small picture in a standing frame on the table down left is Mr. Alving when he was young and full of the "joy of life". Mrs. Alving, and Regina both use it to point up references to Regina's origin. The small sewing basket on the table Mrs. Alving uses to fill her hands, and long conversation scenes are highlighted by the picking up and laying down of her hand work, and reactions accented by a change in rhythm in the movement of her needle in the embroidery. The large painting on the wall down right is presumably one of Oswald's earlier works. He uses it to point his lines about further uselessness of his hands, and it provides a real motivation for a desirable turning away from his mother at certain times in the action.

In *A Doll's House* the tiny picture near the stove is a scene from Nora's childhood. The portrait over the piano is that of her father, the picture down right one brought back from the trip to Italy. In each case, connection of the picture with the thought in line and mind provides motive for business and for significant movement on the small stage. Set dressings can almost always be made to serve a dual purpose in this fashion, and greatly enhance the subtlety of the acting after the connotation has been established in the minds of the audience.

In plays where no platforms or stairs can be used logically for variety of level, it is useful to introduce a footstool into the furniture scheme. More graceful groupings of actors can be arranged with its help. Subservience, confidence, dependence and other emotions and states of mind can be expressed through its use as a seat level for a character. It is well for the director and designer to bear in mind in this connection the desirability of difference in seat height among the other pieces of furniture.

In *Ghosts* no attempt was made to place the play in any particular country; there was merely striving for the feeling of stiff old-fashioned formality in furniture and its placement. The student designer in this case tried to vary the necessary teaser from the usual straight cloth strip, and used a sway effect consistent with the period setting of the play. Its chief fault lay in the fact that it failed to conceal the light sources of the pools supposedly coming from the



Scene from Ibsen's *GHOSTS* as produced by Madge Skelly at Cedar Crest College, Allentown, Pa.

lamps. The apparatus, however, was not as apparent to the audience as to the camera.

In both these sets, the greatest playing depths is about eight feet at the upstage angle of the room, about six feet at the entrances, and it narrows to as little as two feet in front of Nora's centre chair and before the two side furniture groups in *Ghosts*. Yet in neither case was movement restricted by this lack of space. Careful working out of motivated crossings to pictures, lamps, windows, wine bottles, piano, work basket, paintings, Christmas tree, stove, provided brisk and varied movement to contrast with the still tense conflict scenes.

In both cases the only lighting was provided by two spots and three homemade floods, plus the foot strip in *Ghosts*. Only one dimmer was available for all changes in intensity. This meant some careful planning in connections, numerous manual changes backstage in lugging, and all manual working of sun-light, sunset, and fire-in-the-orphanage effects. But a large and willing stage crew can amply make up for lack of an adequate switchboard, and imagination and patience can replace much mechanical equipment.

For *A Doll's House* some local Pennsylvania Dutch furniture and lamps helped to create a rather Norwegian atmosphere, as there are definite similarities in decoration and line. The stove was copied from an illustration in *GEOGRAPHIC*, and manufactured chiefly from a barrel. Three lights inside it, one constant, one on a flicker socket, and a third to be turned on when Nora poked up the fire, provided gradations in motivated lighting. For Nora's conflict scene with Krogstad a chance in lighting is desirable both for the sake of

variety and to assist in establishing change of mood. As business, the director had Nora turn out the lamps and start for the kitchen, leaving the room dim for Krogstad's entrance. When he appeared at the door, Nora stopped, startled. But, eager to be rid of him, she did not turn up the lamps. Krogstad faced the store, Nora the window. The red fire light played on his face, giving it a malevolent quality; the blue green moonlight from the window on Nora made her seem to grow smaller and colder as the scene progressed, as though Krogstad were draining her of all life and hope and warmth. An effective psychological use was made here of an apparently realistic effect.

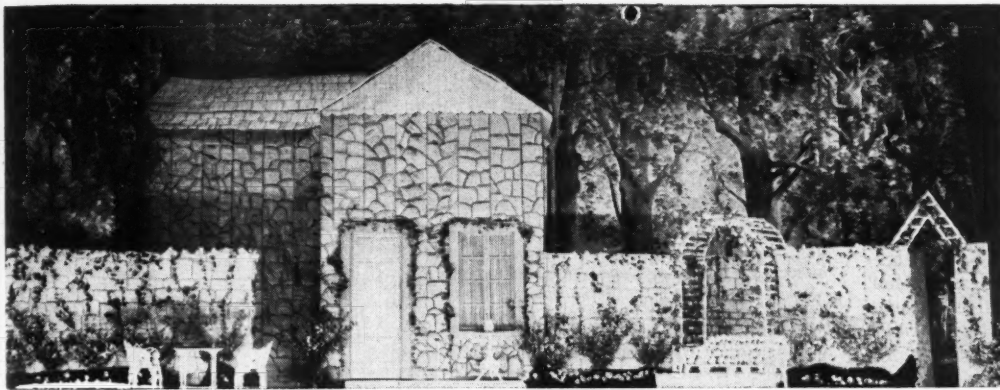
In *Ghosts* for the first time in twelve productions, a footlight strip was used, with dim blue lights in it. During Oswald's confession of his failing mind in the second act, twilight falls, the stage grows dimmer and dimmer, a faint red after-glow spills in thru the windows. Everything else is bathed in deep blue shadows from the foot strip. The lighting conveys the impression that all brightness and hope lie outside this house, that in the Alving home the deep gloom but reflects the dimming of Oswald's mind and is reaching out to absorb his remaining faculties, that the shadow of Mr. Alving spreads and spreads itself till his son is lost in its darkness.

In the third act at the finale, Mrs. Alving puts out the lamps as dawn approaches, the pooled spots go out as she does, so the stage is left faint cold blue from the strip, and the sunrise makes a slant brilliant yellow flare on the floor. For a moment hope seems to come, with the dawn to the shadowed house. Mrs. Alving tries to face the present reality with courage drawn from the light of the new day, then she sees the false hope swallowed like all her other hopes by the shadows of the Alving past, as Oswald crawls like a baby into the sunlight, demanding the sun for a plaything, and fingering the beam idiotically.

Designing Scenery for the Stage By A. S. Gillette

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This setting was designed by D. N. Howell for a production of **'SMILIN' THROUGH'** at the Lubbock, Texas, Senior High School (Thespian Troupe 240).

CASTING ONE-ACTS IN A SMALL HIGH SCHOOL

By ESTHER McCABE

Salamanca High School, Salamanca, N. Y.

IN the small high school, casting a play calls for special tact and planning to avoid petty differences and to secure the complete group cooperation. Too often, the director's prejudices get in the way. The play is the thing, but the following plan has been worked out to give the best performance perhaps, but to give a lesson in democracy, reliability, and human relationship.

The situation is a speech class of thirty in a high school of seven hundred. As a laboratory project this class gives several one-act plays. First, the play is read to all and discussed. The class members talk over the parts each would like and the parts in which they'd like to see their fellow students perform. The setting is enlarged upon and difficulties brought forth, as sound effects, special lighting, etc. Members of the class may, during this initial stage, borrow the manuscripts for a period.

When tryouts are held, certain students ask to try for parts; others ask to hear Mary or Dick read a particular character. The atmosphere is informal, objective, and not at all tense. Then the class votes. The director reserves the right to change an unsuitable choice, but very seldom exercises this right. However, she very often knows that the very best cast has not been chosen, but

says nothing. She is not training actors and actresses, but boys and girls. Student discernment and fairness can usually be trusted. The elected members of the cast are asked to think over carefully whether or not they want and can do the part. A few withdraw. "I just can't see myself in that part," a boy will confide seriously; the part then goes to the next choice.

A few days later, the stage manager and make-up chairman are elected. They choose their own crews and prove

beyond a doubt that they know each other better than any teacher ever can. A class record is kept of all committees. A request is made for a volunteer for the holder of the book, and the play is pronounced in rehearsal. This is the schedule thus far:

Monday — Read play.

Tuesday — Discussion and circulation of play manuscripts.

Wednesday — Tryouts.

Thursday — Finish tryouts and voting.

Friday — Election of stage crews — Cast looking over scripts.

By the following Monday, all is in readiness for the first rehearsal. It sounds like a wasted week. It isn't. All points have been thoroughly taken up and agreed upon and the machinery moves off in a very different way from that in which students simply meet and go into a play head-on. Besides, there is seldom a word of dissatisfaction.

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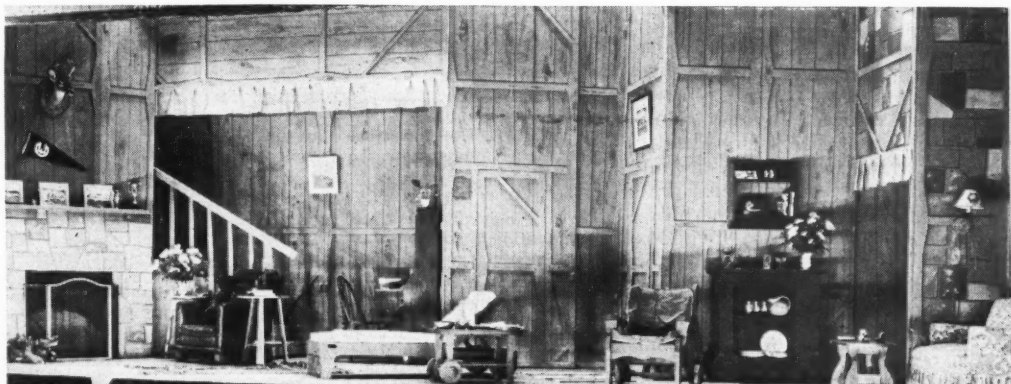
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Setting for a production of **NINE GIRLS** at the McAllen, Texas, High School (Thespian Troupe 769). Staged by Don Irwin.



THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

264 Lexington Ave., New York City

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Request should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

WELL past the mid-season mark, the Broadway theatre finds itself still endeavoring to gather momentum. A few noteworthy productions have been offered and the various pioneering movements (e.g.: the Experimental Theatre, the American National Theatre and Academy, etc.) are being carried along; but the theatre, locally, seems to lack drive and spirit. During the recent interval only a fraction of the number of productions generally produced at this season have opened. In former years, Christmas week was an interval marked by an overflowing of new entries into the New York theatres. This year, the entire week's schedule will not compare to the number that usually bowed on Christmas night alone. What makes the picture so unusually sombre is that one cannot foresee any imminent solution. As long as the prime concern of the theatre remains an economic issue; the trend will be thus.

Antony and Cleopatra

Let us turn from these gloomy reflections to the brighter events among the recent entries. Katharine Cornell has again made a claim to being dubbed the American theatre's outstanding actor-manager. Since 1931, and *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, she has offered the theatregoers of America an impressive list of productions. Occasionally, she has chosen to do a play which would be equally good in the hands of a less gifted artist; but her record includes: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*; George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan*, *Candida*, and *The Doctor's Dilemma*; Maxwell Anderson's *The Wingless Victory*, and Jean Anouilh's *Antigone*. Once again, Miss Cornell has turned to the great Elizabethan dramatist and has chosen one of his most difficult plays, *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is, indeed, a most ambitious project and Miss Cornell has fared more happily than many had anticipated. The play has been presented in the United States only four times in the past forty years. It was almost ten years to the day since the production starring Tallulah Bankhead opened at the Mansfield Theatre in New York when the current offering gave its premiere performance. The 1937 staging lasted only five performances. This is not to invite invidious comparisons, but to give some idea of the hazards involved in doing a play like *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Miss Cornell's production is staged with great beauty. The text is most wisely edited; the action occurring in two parts. The set-

tings of Leo Kerz are fluid, allowing the action to unfold smoothly and without too much interruption and are also beautiful and true. Miss Cornell has been fortunate in the direction of her husband, Guthrie McClintic, one of the theatre's best hands and one from whom we have heard far too little in recent years. She has been fortunate, too, in a fine cast. Godfrey Tearle as Antony and Kent Smith as Enobarbus do much to help the play over its difficult spots. Though her own portrayal lacks some of the sultriness and freedom looked for in *Cleopatra*, Miss Cornell speaks the lines beautifully and plays the more restrained sequences excellently. I looked for less restraint—particularly in the final scenes, but perhaps the actress has complete substantiation for her characterization. She is to be commended, at all events, for having set Shakespeare's tragedy of the famous lovers upon the stage.

The First Mrs. Fraser

Another revival of some interest, though completely different in style and intent, has been that of St. John Ervine's *The First Mrs. Fraser*. Burns Mantle offers an amusing and provocative comment in his BEST PLAYS OF 1929-1930, in which he recounts the events leading up to the first New York production and comments upon the play. "Starting at the Playhouse the last week in December (1929) it was played through to summer, weathering a series of as depressing spring weeks in the theatre as the theatre capital has known in twenty years. Thus does *The First Mrs. Fraser* legitimately take its place with those other plays made in England which did much to tone up a droopy and none too creditable American season." Thus spoke Mr. Mantle almost twenty years ago!

The identical adjectives could be applied to the current season, but this revival did not have the same effect. Jane Cowl played the title role beautifully—with all of the finesse which she brings to any role. The cast, indeed, fulfilled all of the requirements of the script. It is to be deduced that the play itself does not retain vitality and pertinence. This is, I believe, the reason for the apathy on the part of the theatregoing public toward the production. One can admire the technique and the polish of the craftsmanship in

it, but it does not hold one as a theatre-piece should. The run of the play was cut short by an accident which befell Miss Cowl, but it was soon to be terminated and taken on the road. It allowed many of us, too, a chance to see one of the famous successes of the years just prior to our own theatregoing for which we are very grateful to Gant Gaiter, the young producer who gave us the revival of *CRAIG'S WIFE* last season.

New Plays

In the realm of the new plays, the most excitement has been aroused by Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire*, comment upon which must be deferred until my next article. A play which had several lovely qualities but which just fell short of complete success was Dorothy Gardner's story of Emily Dickinson, *Eastward in Eden*. The title was borrowed from a section of the Book of Genesis: "And The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he formed." This was further explained by a line spoken in the play—"... and when we love; earth is a part of heaven."

Most of the action was set in the parlor of the Dickinson home in Amherst, Mass.—over a period of about thirty years. The story of the love of the poetess and the Reverend Charles Wadsworth is well-known, but Miss Gardner has given it a beauty in the telling which has made it more appealing. With the single exception of a dreadfully hokum dream sequence, the story has been told with restraint, with sympathy and with great dramatic clarity. In a badly done incident, which reminded me most forcefully of a similarly artificial scene in *PETER IBBETSON*, the two lovers are made to realize that though physical distances separate them they can be together in spirit. It is too bad that the playwright could not have suggested this through the main body of the play, and avoided the episode which destroyed so much of the effect of her play. Plays about poets are notoriously difficult, but *EASTWARD IN EDEN* came very close to making its mark. The central roles were well played by Beatrice Straight and Onslow Stevens; Ellen Van Volkenburg directed.

The Experimental Theatre went into its second season with Charles Laughton playing the title role in his own adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's *Galileo*. It was an ambitious production—incorporating music, dance, sung choruses and a long roster of spoken roles. The play is an interesting one, presenting an account of Galileo's skirmishes with the Inquisition and with the established thought of his era.

The play was done, too, in a novel style. Mr. Laughton made his entrance through the auditorium, greeted the audience rather informally and thus led them into the play. Stage setting was kept to a minimum—allowing many localities to be represented upon the stage simultaneously. A trio of boys' voices bridge the gap from one scene to another with sung liturgical-like summaries of the action. The music for these is by Hanns Eisler; the lyrics adapted by Albert Brush. They were very sopano, and quite difficult to comprehend. In conclusion, *Galileo* addressed the audience with a warning

IN THE OFFING

TOPAZE—a revival by the New Opera Company of the Pagnol comedy with Oscar Karlweis.

THE LINDEN TREE—J. B. Priestley's new play produced and staged by Maurice Evans.

TONIGHT AT 8:30—Gertrude Lawrence in a revival of the Noel Coward one-act plays.

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A scene from Katharine Cornell's production of *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA*. Miss Cornell is seated just right of center; Mr. Tearle, standing center over the cringing figure. Kent Smith stands up-left; Lenore Ulric between two pillars, right. Setting by Leo Kerz — women's costumes by Valentina — men's costumes by John Boyt.

about the dangers of scientific research and truth when the findings are used toward evil purposes.

The themes of freedom of truth and of expression are always bound to stir the hearts of men, and to set their minds going. *GALILEO* certainly accomplishes this. It may not completely satisfy everyone's preconception of the man, but it cannot fail to move him. One could tell, by reason of his extremely sensitive performance, that the play means a great deal to Mr. Laughton. He has been working with the script for some time, and has sacrificed quite a bit for this Experimental Theatre production. Let us hope that through it he became aware of the flaws, and that before long he will do the play for wider audiences. The Experimental Theatre's next production is to be *SKIPPER NEXT TO GOD*, by Jan de Hartog, whose *THIS TIME TOMORROW* was produced briefly by the Theatre Guild earlier this season. John Garfield will enact the leading role in the play; the direction will be by Lee Strasberg.

Another new script of unusual interest was offered by the Blackfriars' Guild, the vital just-off-Broadway producing organization. This was Father George H. Dunne's *Trial By Fire*, a play in the documentary style. The action is set at the corner's inquest into the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Johnson and their two children. The Johnsons, a Negro family, had moved into the white section of a California village and built their own home. Some time after, the house suddenly caught fire and the family is killed. The play relates, through flash-backs, the various incidents which led up to the fire and ends with the jury returning a verdict of "death by accident". The Blackfriars' production was a forthright piece of drama, which was played with genuine feeling and conviction.

On-Stage, the valiant Greenwich Village outfit, has been mentioned with regularity in my articles this season. Late in November, they offered the New York premiere of T. S. Eliot's *THE FAMILY REUNION*, and they are presently doing Pirandello's *HENRY IV*. This group has shown great daring in all of

their work and, though the details of the production have not always fulfilled their hopes, they have never failed to offer a most stimulating theatregoing experience.

A bit south of On-Stage, the Henry Street Playhouse group presented *A HOUSE POSSESSED*, a new play by Karlton and William Kelms. Set in a Massachusetts town in 1921, the plot of the play revolved around a domestic crisis which reminded one more than a little of some of Ibsen. A great similarity was felt, too, to Thomas Job's, *UNCLE HARRY*, which was played here by Eva LeGallienne and Joseph Schildkraut several seasons ago.

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Revue

Back to the main theatre district, and to a rather novel offering, Edith Piaf, the French singer, was presented by Clifford C. Fischer in a revue program. La Mome Piaf (as she is called by her compatriots) had been seen here before only in *Etoile Sans Lumiere* — a film. Her program, though lacking somewhat in variety, possessed considerable charm. Most of the songs were sung in French, but an English resume was offered.

Accompanying Edith Piaf, was a group of nine young men of considerable talent, Les Compagnons de la Chanson. Their satiric style is as devastating as their charm is winning. In one of their appearances they do "Au Clair de Lune" in the style of several musical aggregations; a Russian male chorus, an operatic troupe, etc. No formal description can do justice to the effect won by the group. They quite took New York, and are currently appearing in one of the local night-spots. Without doubt they will soon be heading toward Hollywood and film appearances. Let us hope that the film powers exercise careful judgment in the use of their gifts.

The Winslow Boy

Before closing, a word must be spoken of *The Winslow Boy*, another successful English importation. Written by Terence Rattigan, the author of the Lunt's most recent production, *O Mistress Mine*, the play is a dramatic re-telling of the famous Archer-Shee case. This case has been made famous in this country by the late Alexander Woollcott, and his setting of it is included in his collection, *Long, Long Ago*. The case was that arising out of the dismissal from Osborne, the British naval training school, of a young student convicted of stealing a postal money note. The family takes the case to court, and ruins itself financially before the boy's innocence is declared.

An English cast is playing *THE WINSLOW BOY* at the Empire Theatre. They have been directed by Glen Byam Shaw, and they do for the play what only an authentically English group could do. There are some plays which defy national transplantation except under the most favorable circumstances. This is one such play. It is vastly important that no false note be struck, that the playing have that characteristic British restraint, that the lines be spoken down not orated. Alan Webb as the father, Michael Newell as the boy and Frank Allenby as the counsel play the chief roles, but the entire cast is right in a very moving play.

It seems barely believable that so much of the season has become history. Before long, it will be prize-giving time and then the statistical summaries will start pouring in. Plays come in and out — with varying lengths of stay. The note of permanence is completely lacking. The theatre, though it is a most powerful mode of expression, is assuredly one of the most ephemeral of all the arts.

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Mention Dramatics Magazine

THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,
Los Angeles, California.

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1947-48 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

AGREEMENT IN DEMOCRACY

EARLY in 1947 the reading public was greeted with a novel that boldly exposed the fact that intolerance in general, and anti-Semitism in particular, breeds in places where it would be least expected—among "nice" people, among "good" people, who would shudder to think they were guilty of spreading racial and religious hatred. The book was Laura Hobson's *Gentleman's Agreement*. It remained on the best seller lists for months.

Author Hobson did not write a preachment. She wove the facts of intolerance into an exciting and dramatic love story.

The story, as adapted for the screen, begins with Phillip Green, a magazine writer and widower, who has come to New York accompanied by his young son and his mother. He has been assigned to do a series of articles on anti-Semitism for Smith's Weekly, a publication edited by friendly, crusading John Minify. At a party in Minify's home Phil meets Minify's divorced niece, Kathy. The fact that Kathy was instrumental in persuading Minify that his magazine should publish Phil's projected series brings about a friendship between her and the writer.

From here, it's the boy-gets-loses-gets-girl outline with radically new sub-headings; new, that is, for the motion picture industry. *Crossfire* already had introduced a protest against anti-Semitism in a first-rate thriller; *Gentleman's Agreement* weaves the protest into the fabric of a first-rate romance.

GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT is adult entertainment and merits the attention of serious students of contemporary drama. Its producer is no crusader, but he is a man known for considerable daring and for having considerable sanity in his dealings with controversial subjects. For many people the picture tells a more attractive story than does the book; heroics are absent, and witty dialog relieves the grimness of the book's narrative. Whatever else it may prove to be, the film admittedly is a step in the right direction. Motion pictures reach a fabulously large audience. It is a credit to the industry that a serious social problem has been expertly treated in a dramatic and entertaining mold.

Before the book had appeared on the stands, Darryl F. Zanuck of 20th Century-Fox, who had shown courage in producing *I AM A FUGITIVE FROM A CHAIN GANG*, *THE GRAPES OF WRATH*, and *WILSON*, had purchased screen rights to the novel from the galley proofs. The preparation for filming got into full swing with the arrival in Hollywood

of playwright Moss Hart, whom Zanuck signed to write the scenario. Hart has faithfully followed the spirit of the story in every respect.

Zanuck selected a capable cast to play the principal and supporting roles. Gregory Peck became Phillip Green; Dorothy McGuire took the part of Kathy; Anne Revere played Mrs. Green; and Albert Dekker played John Minify. John Garfield, Celeste Holm, June Havoc, Jane Wyatt, and Sam Jaffe were among the other players.

Zanuck chose Elia Kazan to direct. Kazan is a former Broadway actor and producer who began his cinema career with *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and then followed this successful start with *Boomerang*, one of the year's most popular pictures.

There was no question in Zanuck's mind as to his choice for the crusading magazine writer. In describing the main character of her novel, Miss Hobson practically elected Gregory Peck: "He was in his thirties, tall . . . with an intelligent, decent face. Eyes and hair were dark . . . There was a quiet about him, an absence of aggression, yet there was no difference in his voice or manner . . ."

Peck, who skyrocketed three years ago in *The Keys of the Kingdom*, and who was nominated for an Academy Award for his performance in *The Yearling*, never tackled a role more seriously.

"I despise intolerance in any form," he said. "I can understand the character Phil Green, for I believe in what he believed, and I feel that an honest portrayal of him on the screen will be a major step towards reaching a solution to a serious problem. By his courage, at least, he will bring this thing out into the open; cause the subject to be discussed by people who hesitated to discuss it before, or discussed it in hush-hush voices. Once you get people to talking you have made an important move towards the ultimate goal—eradication of a blackmark against democracy."

It is while his mother is ill following a heart attack that Phil Green finally hits on the one plan for his articles that should fan the flames of public interest. At one time in the past he has posed as a transient in a broken-down jalopy to learn what runs through the minds of people in similar predicaments; at another he has passed as a coal miner to get at the root of the miners' problems. Why, he reasons, can't he "become a Jew" for six weeks, or even longer if necessary? That was it—a series entitled, for example, "I Was Jewish for Six Months." He decides he will share his scheme with no one except Minify, Kathy, and his mother.

Dorothy McGuire, as Kathy, has turned in a dramatic performance that matches her work in previous assignments. Kathy is a woman who insists

that intolerance should be fought openly and bravely by all who believe in justice for peoples of all races and creeds, but who reaches an emotional conflict with Phil Green over the fact that he insists on pretending to be Jewish around her circle of intolerant friends.

Miss McGuire emerges as one of the year's best-dressed leading ladies, despite the fact that she had never gone in for glamour on the screen. A pixie in *Claudia* and a drudge in *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, she appears as a fashionable New Yorker in *Gentleman's Agreement*.

The role of Dave Goldman, a returned soldier who has long felt the sting of prejudice, went to John Garfield, who felt that the part was one of the most important of his career. He summed up his decision to accept a relatively minor job with the remark, "Any actor who'd rather mark up a screen for 90 minutes of a mediocre part than to take a crack at a great one worth 20 minutes, had better stop and take stock of himself."

The role of Goldman, incidentally, marked a change of pace for Garfield, who shed his characteristic toughness to portray a war veteran who accepts intolerance philosophically rather than with violence. In the final analysis, his kindness and his understanding of the problem brings Kathy and Phil together again after they have broken off their engagement.

Celeste Holm, the vivacious blonde who signed a long-term contract with 20th Century-Fox while starring in the stage hit, *Oklahoma*, landed her first dramatic part on the screen as Anne Dettrey, the friendly and completely unprejudiced fashion editor of the magazine which publishes Green's series of articles.

Miss Holm had told the studio she would rather do dramatic parts than musicals. She soon found herself dividing her time between two pictures for several weeks — *Gentleman's Agreement* and *The Snake Pit*, which were filmed simultaneously.

The role of Mrs. Green went to Anne Revere, an Academy Award winner a few years ago. Miss Revere had planned a long rest after completing her third picture of the year in June. But when Zanuck offered her the part of Phil Green's mother, she changed her mind. "I couldn't think of refusing," she said, "because the role is by far the best I have ever had. As the liberal, understanding mother of a crusading writer, I was given the widest field of dramatic range I have ever had the good fortune to encounter."

June Havoc, noted stage actress, returned to the screen to take the part of the secretary, Miss Wales, who confesses she has had to change her name because the personnel manager of Smith's Weekly harbors prejudices . . . Jane Wyatt, who achieved stardom ten years ago in



The audience shares Phil Green's problems as interpreted by Gregory Peck in the moving romantic drama, *GENTLEMAN'S AGREEMENT*.

Lost Horizon and who lately has been devoting most of her time to the stage, took over Kathy's sister . . . Albert Dekker, who scored in *The Killers*, became Mr. Minify, the energetic and courageous editor of Smith's Weekly . . . Sam Jaffee, familiar character actor, was cast as Professor Lieberman, a world famous physicist.

As the story moves forward, audiences begin to identify themselves with Phil Green and to sympathize with his problems. And often they recognize in his encounters with prejudice, habits of mind and behaviour that are uncomfortably familiar. For Phil finds prejudice cropping up everywhere — flicks here and there of insult that tap constantly on the nerves. No yellow armbands, no marked park benches, no Gestapo, no torture chambers; just a flick here and a flick there. First it is revealed in Dr. Craigie when Phil remarks that he has made an appointment with a Jewish doctor to see his mother; again when the janitor in the apartment where he is living warns him when Phil prints the name "Phillip Greenberg" above the typed name of "Green" on the mailbox; and again when he finds that an inn, where he has planned to honeymoon with Kathy, is "restricted" and is thus closed to them.

The implications of the film become clear in the climax. While individuals may object to certain minor aspects of the social analysis, there can be no quibbling about the general proposition, nor about the dramatic structure of the story. *Gentleman's Agreement* is a stimulating springboard for club and classroom discussion.

How They Were Staged (Supplement No. 1), Edited by Earl W. Blank. Contains complete information on the staging of the following plays: *Angel Street*, *The Admirable Crichton*, *Ramshackle Inn*, *Pugmation*, *Blithe Spirit*, *The Barrets of Wimpole Street*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Papa Is All*. Price, 60 cents.

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Mention Dramatics Magazine

The Radio Program of the Month

By S. I. SCHARER, Radio Department

New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1947-48 school year. Comments and suggestion from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

"HERE'S MORGAN"

(American Broadcasting System, Wednesday, 10:30 P. M. EST.)

FOR those who dispute the idea that twelve is the mental age of the audience, a new champion has arisen. His name is Henry Morgan and his adult approach to listeners weekly challenges the "doctrine of low mentality".

Morgan's humor is strikingly different from that of his radio contemporaries. It's zany but adult, hilarious but intelligent.

But it is in the use of satire that Morgan really excels. Satire, one of the less-attended-to forms of humor on the air, comes in for a generous share of attention. Morgan employs the sharpest barbs to plague Hollywood, politicians, the administration, radio, and society in general.

Nothing is sacred on this program. One of its most entertaining features is the humorous treatment of the commercials. Morgan seems to be following the line of reasoning that sponsors have "kidded" the people long enough by their extravagant claims. So, he reverses the process and "kids" the sponsor. Sometimes merely by the inflection of his voice he changes the entire meaning of the sponsor's message. At other times, he pokes fun at what the announcer reading the commercial is saying. He finds devious ways and means to satirize his own sponsor's claims as well as those of other radio advertisers and, incidentally, draws greater attention to the commercial.

Morgan's chief stooge and funniest character is played by twenty-four year old Arnold Stang. Stang has played

with most comedians on the major networks, including Ed Gardner, Jack Benny, Fred Allen, Alan Young, Milton Berle, and with The Goldbergs as Seymour.

On no other program, however, has Stang's particular talents been so well exploited. He has been so funny on past programs that the sound of his voice alone sets people to laughing.

Another mainstay of "Here's Morgan" Bernard Green and his orchestra. Green's musical antics range all the way from "Pop Goes the Weasel" to "Carmen". His music is a delight that matches the mood of the program brilliantly.

TO find out what Henry Morgan is like is quite a chore. Interviewing him is like taking a ride on an intellectual merry-go-round with a calliope thrown in for laughs . . . or if he happens to be busy and doesn't feel like talking, it is like going through a revolving door into a vacuum.

Like all true humorists, he is a serious-minded young man concerned with the foibles of our time . . . and his mind has a hair trigger spring that releases satire sharp enough to punch holes in all the stuffed-shirtism in America.

Morgan, blue-eyed, blond, neatly dressed, might be taken by unsuspecting souls for what he likes to call "the average man" a bank clerk, an advertising man, or a certified public accountant. That is, until he opens his mouth. Then it is every man for himself.

When asked about hobbies, he says flying and tropical fish. When asked what kind of tropical fish he keeps, he replies, "the live ones". The dead ones, he says, he donates to a mouse named Gabriel.

According to Morgan, he was born of mixed parentage — man and woman — on the day before April Fools Day, 1915. A native New Yorker he started poking fun at radio years ago when, at the age of 17, he went to work as a page for WMCA, New York, at eight dollars a week. He soon discovered that page boys' opinions were not solicited concerning programs and announcers. To avoid trouble with his comments he developed a horrible leer, which made the Morgan opinion perfectly clear.

He became an announcer at WMCA, transferred to WABC, New York, long enough to learn the way by streetcar, then moved over to WCAU in Philadelphia. He left the City of Brotherly Love not long after he considerably inserted the station manager's name on a missing persons broadcast.



HENRY MORGAN

Morgan settles for an ice cream soda during a rehearsal of one of his broadcasts.

After working on WEBC, Duluth and WNAC, Boston, Morgan returned to New York where he was hired by WOR as an announcer and was assigned, among other chores, to dance band "remotes". One band played at a place quite far from New York and Morgan was required to say, "This program program comes to you from the So-and-So Tavern, 45 minutes from Times Square". He didn't think the statement was accurate or made sense, so he added "...if that's where you're starting from, or if you have a motorcycle with a triple overdrive".

Finally WOR decided to give Morgan a once a week program on which he would be allowed to do all the kidding he wanted. That was the beginning of his famous program, "Meet Mr. Morgan", which later was expanded to three a week and retitled "Here's Morgan". This show became so successful that it was broadcast on a six day a week basis.

After a row with the executives of WOR, which he gleefully related in detail to his radio audience, he went on the air and auctioned off the whole network, station by station, vice-president by vice-president, for \$83, including good will. The announcers he sold in pairs "so they wouldn't be lonely".

He entered the army in 1943 and wasn't heard on the air again until his discharge in the fall of 1945 when he resumed with "Here's Morgan" over ABC.

MORGAN has one rigorously severe critic . . . himself. When he gets off a sour gag, and it happens to the best of them occasionally, he winces . . . and tells his listening audience to tune in on another station. If the network would permit it, he would bring a set into the studio and try to get a "good" program himself for his listeners.

In radio circles, Morgan is regarded as one of the most versatile dialecticians in the business and he is fluently at home in such accents as Russian, French, German, and British. His explanation for this is that he had to be good or go out of business. For years he worked alone, so when it became necessary for him to talk to characters of various nationalities he had to play those characters. Now, although he employs other characters on his new show, he could readily play all the roles himself. As it is, he directs all of the actors in exactly the meanings and innuendoes he had in mind when the script was written.

Morgan never fails to startle executives. They invariably tune him in on his 15 minute New York show because nine out of ten times he would be talking about them. He constantly lampoons not only individuals, but the network as well. A choice bit of Morgania came to pass through a switch in mail.

There is at ABC a Harry Morgan, a pleasant person who is right-hand man to the treasurer of the Company, and who works peacefully enough on ABC's facts and figures. THE Henry rather tired of receiving what he thought were fan letters, only to find stacks of figures.



ARNOLD STANG

Stang is Morgan's chief stooge and one of radio's outstanding funny men.

One evening he opened his broadcast saying that he had a nice brown envelope addressed to him marked "confidential", which he immediately tore open.

Continuing with the broadcast, he remarked, "Ah, the financial report of the American Broadcasting Company". Vice-presidents and network executives tuned in to the unpredictable Morgan leaned toward their loud speakers. Knowing the irresponsible Henry with a choice opportunity like this, they prepared themselves for hearing the confidential figures of the company broadcast to the world at large. Henry kept them squirming for a full five minutes. "Well . . . here we have Spot Sales . . . my-oh-my-oh-my," he mullied out loud. He gave out no vital statistics, but is was uncomfortable several minutes for the ABC Brass hats.

Nothing is more haphazard than the way Morgan assembles his show. Newspaper items, chance remarks heard in an elevator, people talking to themselves on the streets, billboard and bus advertisements, signs in store windows, magazine articles, Army regulations, movies, the housing shortage . . . all serve as material for his program. He has an enormously retentive memory and never has to make notes at the time he hears or sees something usable.

An expert ad-libber, all Morgan needs is a line or two to take off from. However, in deference to the other actors and musicians, he is using a script on his new ABC show.

Morgan's fans are many and enthusiastic. Among them are such notables as Groucho Marx, Fred Allen, James Thurber, S. J. Perelman, Ben Hecht, and Charles MacArthur. The late Robert Benchley, also a great Morgan enthusiast, once sent him a weird Spanish record for his collection.

The chances are that if you tune into "Here's Morgan", you will readily join his "fan club".

THREE-ACT DRAMATIZATION

by

Pauline Phelps

JANE EYRE

A drama adapted from Charlotte Bronte's book of the same title. 5 m. 7 f. 1 int., a living-room. From the time Jane Eyre comes to Thornfield Hall as governess to Adele, a little French girl who is a ward of Edward Rochester, to the very moving close, the interest never lags. A play that is well worth the effort of the cast and will provide an intensely entertaining evening for the audience.

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LITTLE MINISTER

6 m. 6 f. 1 int. From Technical Director's Page, High School Thespian: "There is a quality about this show that Barrie put there himself, but it is to the author's credit that she gets so much of Barrie in her own book. The play was made immortal by the great Maude Adams — but the elfin charm of the little gypsy is just as fresh in these pages. Pauline Phelps has done a grand job."—Leslie Allen Jones.

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MISS MINERVA AND WILLIAM GREEN HILL

A dramatization of Frances Boyd Calhoun's beloved book. William and his little friends are a number of years older than when we first met them, and a humorous, yet gripping plot has also been added, but, the familiar incidents, the sprightly dialogue, and the charm of our old friends, Billy, Sarah Jane, Miss Minerva and the Major, has been kept intact. 5 m. 6 f. 1 int.

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Mention Dramatics Magazine

THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

STAGING DEAR RUTH

By JESS W. GERN

Director of Dramatics, Western State College, Gunnison, Colorado

DEAR RUTH, a comedy in two acts, by Norman Krasna. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$50.00. Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 6 East 39th Street, New York, N.Y.

Suitability

DEAR RUTH is a commendable comedy for college groups, and a good high school cast could produce the play with a few minor line changes. The cast of ten, five men and five women, presents a size that is easy to work with. No character is particularly weak, even Harold Klobbermeyer's single line is a punch line that brings the play to an uproarious finish. The action must be light and deft, and pick-up of cues should be particularly noticed. The stage movement seems to grow out of the author's lines.

If you have a squeamish community or school administration, it would probably be wise to change some of the lines about sex which are expounded by our sixteen-year-old trouble-maker, Miriam. Very little else needs to be changed. Actually, the lines are extremely life-like, and should be changed only if necessary.

Plot

Probably everyone is familiar with the plot, DEAR RUTH having had both extensive New York and road show productions. It recently came out in the movies. Miriam Wilkins, the high school senior, who is only sixteen (one full year ahead of the average) is also about a year ahead of the average in anything else. She embroils her sister Ruth, in a love affair with one of "our boys" overseas by sign-

ing Ruth's name to various potent love poems chosen from the Romantic Period of English literature. Ruth, herself, has a 4-F boy friend who has a bad back. The complications are hilarious, and the older generation represented by Judge and Mrs. Wilkins look upon them with wonder.

Casting

The casting itself should present no particular problem except the usual ones of intelligence, industriousness, and imagination. Judge Wilkins might be a little ponderous in size, however his brain must function quickly. He is thoroughly easy-going. He has a nice wife, Edith, a typical subscriber to THE AMERICAN HOME. She should be selected rather carefully as to size, in order to contrast somewhat with the Judge. Miriam has a fine part. She is a typical adolescent, and although she does not have many lines the chances for characterization are more evident in this part than any other part in the play. Ruth Wilkins and Lt. William Seawright carry the "romantic leads". There is nothing difficult about these character types. Naturally, the more beautiful and handsome they are, the better. If these people have some imagination, their contribution to the total effort will be much more effective. Albert Kummer, the 4-F banker, has a part that can too easily become a caricature, and over-

playing must constantly be watched for here. The part can become a burlesque, and bring a ruinous conclusion to the play as a whole. Martha Seawright and Chuck Vincent have small parts which should be presented rather briskly. Dora, the Negro maid, can be cast as a "northern" girl to good advantage, and her stage business is important. Harold Klobbermeyer, again, must be able to put up with a lot of waiting for his one line, but he can make or break the play with it. He was cast in our production as a very small sailor with a very "big" attitude.

It would be hard to say which parts in the play present the most difficulty. Possibly the hardest to explain are Bill Seawright and Ruth Wilkins. The restraint in Kummer's part should be noted, as should the audacity in Miriam's. Trying to play the parents as a sort of two-man Greek chorus, just a little out of step with the rest, can bring a good reaction; and some critics believe this was also the author's intent.

Rehearsals

The play's construction suits itself very easily to rehearsal, there being two acts with three scenes to each act. It is not necessary for all the characters to be present at all the rehearsals, and the author's natural dividing places seem to be the most logical ones to use.

Stage Problems

The set is easily built, and is one that offers little change for the faithful stage crew, as it can present something different from the usual box set.

As the breakfast nook of this home in Kew Gardens, Long Island, must not look too much a part of the living room, the solution can be found by building a two-sided instead of three-sided room. From downstage right we angled back at about 60 degrees some twenty-two feet. This enabled us to put the entrance arch first and then build in a stairway parallel with the wall, with a landing and another set of stairs to come onto the stage in the corner at the extreme rear of the set. Our stage opening measures 33 feet at this point was about 11 feet toward center stage. From here we pointed to the left down stage corner and built a long wall, extending it down to about 7 feet from the curtain line. Then a three-foot jog was placed back at right angles, and the flats continued across to a regulation size door flat at the left stage side for the kitchen. This jog is enough to give the illusion of a breakfast nook, which is what is needed. Windows were built above the nook, and the garden entrance was put in the long wall.

In the matter of properties, if the play is presented in the winter time, the tremendous quantity of lilacs necessitated will present a problem. We solved it by cutting crepe paper in varying shades of purple into circles of 2 inch diameter. The circles were then folded

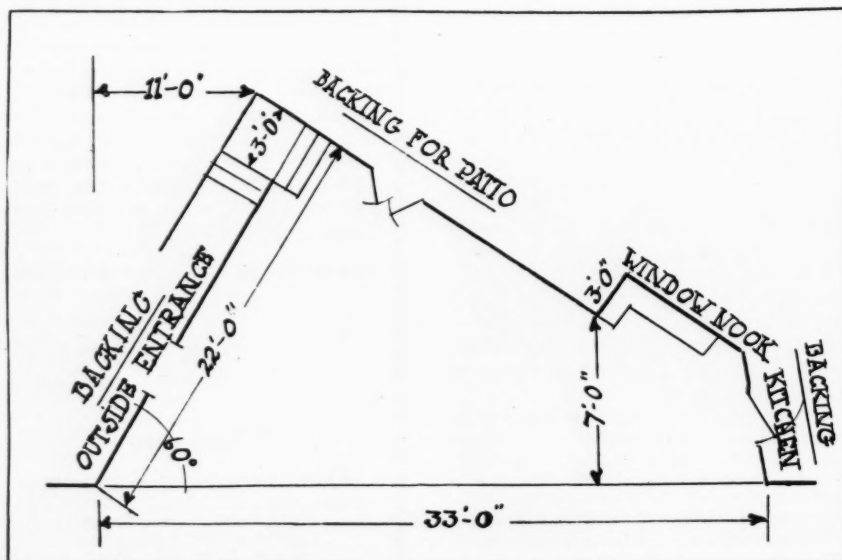


Diagram of setting used for the production of DEAR RUTH at Western State College, Gunnison, Colorado, with Jess W. Gern as director.



Set used for the production of *Dear Ruth* on Broadway. (Courtesy of The Dramatists Play Service, Inc.)

into quarters and strung on medium heavy florist's wire. Sixty to 75 of these quarters were put on a wire. The bottom part of the wire was then wound with green floral tape. With the addition of some huckleberry some rather pleasing bouquets were obtained.

Lighting

A flood placed outside the breakfast nook helped give the effect of morning sunlight streaming into the room. This was brought about even more clearly by placing knick-knacks on the window shelves.

Lighting needs need to be coordinated in the night scenes only and with practice should not prove to be too difficult.

Costuming

The only costuming problem present is that of the two soldiers and the sailor, and in these post-war days that is easily taken care of. Everyone else can use his own clothes to good advantage.

Make-up

Make-up was as follows:

Dora: Foundation, 14; moist rouge, 3; lining, 12. 17. 19; lip rouge, 3; powder, 24.
Mrs. Edith Wilkins: Foundation, 9. 10; moist rouge, 4; lining, 16; lip rouge, 4; powder, 6. 19. 20.
Miriam Wilkins: Foundation, 4. 9; moist

rouge, 3; lining, 2. 12. 19. 21; lip rouge, 3; powder, 3. 6. 22.

Judge Harry Wilkins: Foundation, 7. 10. 28; moist rouge, 4; lining, 16; lip rouge, 4; powder, 6. 10. 20.

Ruth Wilkins: Foundation, 1. 3. 9; moist rouge, 2; lining, 6. 9. 20; lip rouge, 2; powder, 2. 18. 19.

Lt. William Seawright: Foundation, 7. 13; moist rouge, 4; lining, 7. 9. 21; lip rouge, 4; powder, 8. 11. 12.

Albert Kummer: Foundation, 3. 6; moist rouge, 3; lining, 6. 7. 12. 21; lip rouge, 2; powder, 4. 8. 19.

Martha Seawright: Foundation, 6. 7; moist rouge, 4; lining, 2. 7. 9; lip rouge, 3; powder, 10. 11. 21.

Sgt. Chuck Vincent: Foundation, 7; moist rouge, 4; lining, 7. 9; lip rouge, 3; powder, 10. 21. 23.

Harold Klobbarmeyer: Foundation, 8; moist rouge, 4; lining, 7. 9; lip rouge, 4; powder, 10. 21. 23.

These numbers refer to Stein's stick grease-paint. Several numbers indicate a choice of colors. One combination of paint and powder is preferable to another under various lights. The same is true of lining colors. Where more than one number appears, there is one for wrinkles, two for highlights, and three for eye shadow.

Budget

Royalty	\$50.00
*Play Books	20.32
Advertising	5.00

Stagecraft	5.00
Programs	10.92
Properties	1.75
Make-up	10.00
	\$102.99

Publicity

The town and school newspapers were very cooperative with news stories. The art department made some very clever posters using love letters as a theme. Some of these posters had glossy photographs of the leading players on them. We were quite pleased with the results.

Educational Values

Dear Ruth was played to a capacity audience. It was felt that the subject matter, that of a returned soldier, attracted many of the veterans who might not have come otherwise. This play should be good for a few more years, but when the sounds of guns leave our ears, if ever, the play will very probably become definitely dated. If you plan to produce it, do so soon.

*These were reading books as actor's books were not available at the time. They can now be obtained for 85¢.

March Issue: Staging CUCKOOS ON THE HEARTH.

The court ballet performs for the king in Schubert's operetta, *Rosamunde*, produced at the North Central High School (Thespian Troupe 628), Spokane, Washington. Directed by Grace Gorton.



CALENDAR

Children's Theatre of Evanston, Ill.

Nov. 7, 8, 13, 15 — *The Blue Bird*
 Jan. 22, 24, 30, 31, — *Mr. Dooley, Jr.*
 Feb. 27, 28, Mar. 4, 6, — *Rumpty-Dud-
 get's Tower* (a brand new play by Polly
 Robbins Lowndes)
 Apr. 23, 24, 29, May 1, — *The Boy Ti-
 tion*

Children's World Theatre, New York (change in program)

Fall — *Jack and the Beanstalk*
 Dec. 13, 14, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30,
 31, Jan. 2, 3, 4 — *Many Moons*
 Opening Jan. 10 — *Red Riding Hood*
 Opening Feb. 14 — *The Indian Captive*
 Opening Mar. 20 — *Rumpelstiltskin*

Children's Theatre of Washington, D. C.

Dec. 12, 13, 29, 30 — *Peter Pan*

Boston Tributary Theatre

Little Red Riding Hood
Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater
The Wizard of Oz
Pinocchio
A Christmas Carol
Rip Van Winkle
Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates

Peter Pan Players, St. Louis

An Arabian Night
Hans Brinker
The Ghost of Mr. Penny
The Elves of the Shoemaker

MacPhail School of Music, Minneapolis

December — *The Ghost of Mr. Penny*

Children's Theatre of Portland, Me.

Star in Your Heart, Christmas dance pro-
 gram.
The Indian Captive
Jack and the Beanstalk

Drake University, Des Moines

Heidi
The Sleeping Beauty

Seattle Junior Programs

Heidi
Red Riding Hood
The Elves and the Shoemaker
Treasure Island

Portland, Oregon, Civic Theatre

Rumpelstiltskin
A Christmas Carol
Hansel and Gretel
Marco Polo
Bobino
Many Moons

Reno Little Theatre

Jack and the Beanstalk
Rumpelstiltskin

University of Denver

Aladdin
A Christmas Carol
The Indian Captive

Youngstown, Ohio, Playhouse

Aladdin

Kansas City (Mo.) Children's Community Theatre

Hansel and Gretel — Kansas City Mu-
 settes
Secret Tunnel — Junior League

Savannah Children's Theatre

Nov. 10-14 — *Princess and the Swine-
 herd*

Jackson, Miss., Children's Theatre

The Patriotic Pirate

DRAMA FOR CHILDREN

By LOUISE C. HORTON

*Drama Department, The College of St. Catherine,
 St. Paul, Minn.*

This Department has for its purpose the advancement of the Children's Theatre Movement in America. Directors and teachers are urged to report to Miss Horton, for publication in this Department, news of their productions and other significant projects.

BACK in 1937 in the cast of *Peter Pan* at Northwestern University was the name Kenneth L. Graham as Papa Darling. That was fortunate casting, for Ken Graham, a young student working for his M.A., from that point became interested in creative dramatics and children's theatre. On a fellowship he continued at Northwestern through 1938-39, taught a course in puppetry for Winifred Ward, and finished the M.A.

In 1941 Graham went to Cain Park Theatre in Cleveland Heights, Ohio, to set up a Children's School of the Theatre, which has developed an outstanding program of theatre training for youth. In this municipally-owned and operated theatre school, the emphasis is on the creative approach in teaching theatre and the allied arts. With a staff of fifteen competent, well-trained specialists teaching the classes, Ken Graham acted as Director of the Children's Theatre School.

The winter of 1941 found the same energetic young man at Minneapolis, setting up the Young People's Theatre there at the University of Minnesota. These organizations grew into two of the brightest stars in the children's theatre national picture, and they continue adding steadily to the cultural life of their individual communities.

Then came Pearl Harbor and the war took Ken Graham away from Cain Park, the University of Minnesota, and children's theatre for four years. But the two theatres continued, Cain Park under the direction of Dorothy Kestor, and the Minnesota Young People's Theatre, under Dr. Frank Whiting, head of the University Theatre.

Lieutenant Graham returned to Cain Park the summer of 1946. Then he travelled to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, where in December he became Dr. Graham, having just obtained his Ph. D. The greater part of his work was done in children's theatre. His dissertation was entitled: AN INTRODUC-

TORY STUDY OF EVALUATION OF PLAYS FOR CHILDREN'S THEATRE IN THE UNITED STATES.

The most recent development in Dr. Graham's career took place the first of the year when he returned to the University of Minnesota to join the University Theatre staff as Assistant Professor, and Director of the Young People's Theatre.

MANY states, among them Michigan, Tennessee, California, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Virginia, are following the lead of the Minnesota Radio Council in producing radio programs for youth, by youth, and about youth.

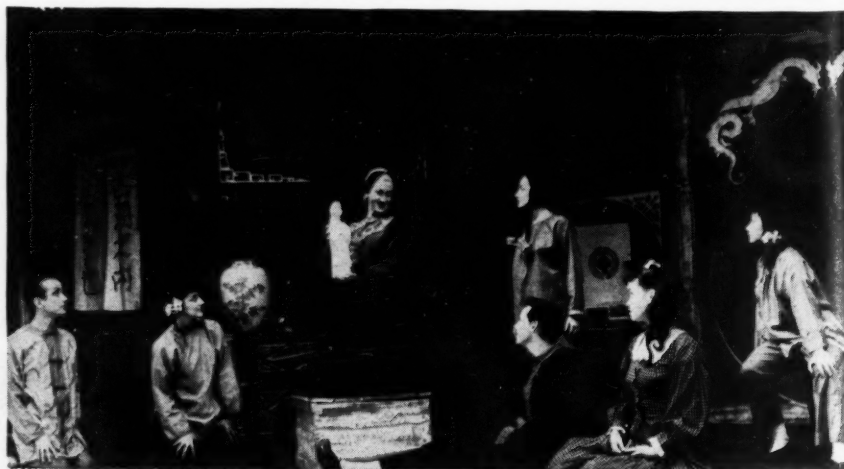
To combat juvenile delinquency and to aid youth in solving its problems are the chief aims of the Council. However, many programs excellent in other respects as well, have resulted and are resulting.

Their latest highly successful endeavor, which began in the fall and is continuing until April 7, is a statewide project of broadcasts, community discussion, and planned meetings. The central program idea is entitled AS THE TWIG IS BENT, in which case-histories of Upper Midwest delinquents will be dramatized and presented over the air.

At the annual meeting of the Minnesota Radio Council, May 7, 1947, the following resolution was passed: "The Radio Council resolves that attention to the needs of youth and allowing youth a voice in community affairs is a proper function of radio."

This was a springboard for the series of programs which followed. The Council feels "that youth's participation in this activity will provide a wholesome, creative outlet for energies that will have a profound bearing on the working out of the youth problem in Minnesota."

In line with this principle are the "town-meeting" discussions following each week's broadcast. At these meetings, high school and university students, police officials, social workers and other interested persons join in discussing the delinquent youth problem and its prevention.



Scene from *LITTLE LEE BO-BO*, by Charlotte Chorpennig, as produced at the Goodman Theatre, Chicago, Ill.

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Two important names in connection with this activity are: Mrs. George B. Palmer, Youth Conservation Chairman of the Minnesota Radio Council; and Mrs. Dorothy Lewis, Coordinator of Listener Activity for the National Association of Broadcasters. Mrs. Lewis is well-known for her work since 1927 in bringing children's and youth programs to the air.

It is appropriate that the newest city in the United States should have the newest children's theatre (at least according to last reports). The city is Oak Ridge, Tenn.

In connection with their theatre, this group sponsors and operates a workshop for children. Broadly, the subjects they offer are singing, radio and dramatics, but within these general headings are many interesting developments. In the singing class, Mrs. Ebenezer Williams often sings French songs, then gives the English interpretation. She also tell stories in French and in pantomime.

The dancing classes cover tap and ballet, folk dancing, and story dancing, and are taught by Mrs. R. E. Watson, Jr., and Mrs. William Reynolds.

Word has come of two other Children's theatre Workshops, one conducted by the University of Denver, Colorado, for children ages 7-13, in acting, play production, creative dramatics, and participation in original and standard plays; and the second, by the Children's Theatre of Lexington, Ky., made possible by the cooperation of Sayre College, giving the children's theatre use of the school auditorium during try-outs, rehearsals and the presentation of their plays, and also a room beneath the auditorium for their workshop classes in speech and voice training, stage manners and mechanics, make-up, set design and construction, and properties.

Two sectional meetings pertaining to children theatre were held during the twelfth annual convention of the American Educational Theatre Association in Salt Lake City, December 29-31. Among the subjects discussed were organizational problems in children's theatre, new production techniques, and criteria for judging children's theatre. Virginia Lee Com-

er's address on Children's Theatre in Community Life was well received. Equally popular was the demonstration on children's theatre presented under the supervision of Burdette Fitzgerald, with Miss Comer giving a critique of the performance of JACOB HAMBLIN, an original play by Albert O. Mitchell.



Scene from the play, *THE SQUIRE'S BRIDE*, by Viola Van Zee and Charlotte B. Chorpennig. A production of Thespian Troupe 106, Champaign, Illinois, Senior High School, with Marion V. Stuart as director.

On The High School Stage

News items published in this department are contributed by schools affiliated with:

The National Thespian Society

Muncie, Ill.

TWO major plays were presented this past season at the Oakwood Township High School (Troupe 62) with Ann Ogan as sponsor. The first play, *Almost Eighteen*, was given on November 20. The second play, *Professor, How Could You!* was staged on May 2. Dramatics club meetings held during the season were devoted to a study of make-up, history of the theatre, and techniques of play production. The initiation of six new members as Thespians was held before the student body. The formal ceremony was observed.

Oklahoma City, Okla.

CLASS plays given during the 1946-47 season at the Central High School (Troupe 822) were *Engaged*, presented on December 12 by the junior class, and *Remember the Day*, staged by the senior class on May 20. Both plays were directed by Maybelle Conger. The season also included the production of six one-act plays for school purposes: *Submerged*, *Who Gets the Car Tonight*, *A Painting for the Duchess*, *Still Alarm*, *The Amateurs*, and *Three Friends*. The climax to the year's program was reached with the formal installation of Troupe 822 under Miss Conger's direction.

Woodland, Calif.

MAJOR plays announced for the current school year at the Woodland High School (Troupe 408), with Albert O. Hiddleston as director are, *Our Town*, December 4-6, and *A Date With Judy*, scheduled for this coming spring. Both productions are sponsored by the student body. Plans for this season also include an evening of three one-act plays to be presented by Thespians in observance

of National Drama Week in February. The Christmas Season was observed with a pageant, *The Fourth Wiseman*, given December 19-21 by the student body. Thespians of this school are active in behalf of the County Welfare Fund, and are giving assistance to the Junior Red Cross in providing programs for veterans hospitals in the area.—Jo Ann McDonald, Secretary.

Warsaw, Ind.

THE 1947-48 dramatics season at the Warsaw High School (Troupe 206) opened with a performance of the three-act comedy, *Brother Goose*, staged by the junior class on December 2 under the direction of Mrs. Mildred Petrie, Thespian sponsor at this school. The fall term has also seen the production of a pageant, *Pages of Our History*, given on November 11 by the dramatics club. Club meetings this season are given to a study of the history of drama.—Eloise Bilby, Secretary.

Roxana, Ill.

TO members of Thespian Troupe 556, with Katharine Taylor as sponsor, has been assigned the responsibility of producing all major plays this year at the Roxana Community High School. The first three-act play, *The Inner Willy*, was presented by Thespians on October 14. The second major play, *The Tavern*, is announced for production in February, while the third production, *Macbeth*, will be presented in April. On November 21, the Music Department and Thespians were joint producers of the operetta, *Love Goes South*. At the time of this writing, a number of students were planning to attend a performance of *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay* at the Webster Groves, Mo., High School (Troupe 191).—Ray Hayes, Secretary.

Thespians of Troupe 187 at Brownsville, Pa., Sponsor Successful Drama Clinic

ONE hundred forty persons representing seventeen high schools attended the one-day drama clinic held on Saturday, October 11, at the Brownsville, Pa., Senior High School, with members of Thespian Troupe 187 and other dramatics students under the direction of Jean A. Donahey in charge.

The largest delegation to the clinic came from Thespian Troupe 226 of the Washington Irving High School, Clarksburg, W. Va. under the direction of Lillie Mae Bauer. The entire membership of this troupe of eighteen students traveled eighty-six miles to Brownsville. This Troupe was awarded a copy of Sheldon Cheney's *THE THEATRE* for having traveled the greatest distance of any of the groups present at the clinic.

Other schools represented at the clinic were as follows: Fort Hill High School (Troupe 230), Cumberland, Md.; Swissvale High School, Pittsburgh; Sewickley High School, Sewickley; Warwood High School (Troupe 539), Wheeling, W. Va.; Saltsburg, Pa., High School; Trinity High School, Washington, Pa.; Uniontown, Pa., High School; Snowden Township High School, Pittsburgh; Scottsdale, Pa., High School; Monongahela, Pa., High School; Crafton, Pa., High School; Clairton, Pa., High School; South High School, Pittsburgh; South Union High School, Uniontown; Redstone High School, Republic, Pa.; Perry Township High School, Perrysburg; State Teachers College, California; and Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Splendid cooperation from many sources in Brownsville High School and from the community resulted in an outstandingly successful program which opened with an address of welcome by Supervising Principal R. T. Barner of the Brownsville Schools. Among those who spoke during the day were Faith Swartz of Perry Township High School (What Judges Look for in Readings), Talbot Pearson of Carnegie Institute of Technology (Building Characterization in Plays), J. H. Bowen of California State Teachers College (Your Speech and Voice in the Play), Mrs. Talbot Pearson (Make-Up), and Leon Connell of California State Teachers College (What Makes the Play). The program also included a performance of the one-act play, *GOOD NIGHT PLEASE*, given by members of Thespian Troupe 187. The clinic was planned and directed by Jean A. Donahey who is well known to many readers of this magazine as Senior Counselor for The National Thespian Society.

Amherst, Ohio

AN enthusiastic reception by large audiences greeted the two performances of the comedy, *Life of the Party*, given on October 22, 23, at the Amherst High School (Thespian Troupe 730), with the production sponsored by the Speech Department under the direction of Margaret R. Egeland. The Speech Department also presented a special program on November 10, in recognition of National Education Week. Material for this program was contributed by teachers and students from the kindergarten to the high school level. Some fifty students from this school recently attended a performance of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, presented in Elvria, Ohio, by a company of players from New York City. Students plan to attend several plays this season at the Cleveland Playhouse and the Karnau Theatre, also of Cleveland.—Louise Adler, Secretary.

West York, Pa.

THE two performances of *Don't Take My Penny* on November 21, 22, with the Dramatics Society as sponsor, marked the opening of major dramatic productions for this year at the West York High School (Thespian Troupe 773), with Clara M. Lentz as sponsor. Thespians contributed two performances of the one-act, *I'm A Fool* earlier in the fall. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of play production and lighting.

Mt. Vernon, Wash.

MAJOR plays for the current school year at the Mt. Vernon High School (Thespian Troupe 207) include the junior class production of *Double Door* (November 21) and *January Thaw* which will be presented by the senior class in February. Recent Thespian productions include three one-act plays: *Dust of the Road*, *Bessie or Life on the Farm*, and *Grotesque for November*. Plans for the spring call for a production of the all-school operetta, *Red Mill*. Meetings of the drama groups at this school have been devoted to the study of scene design, production, acting, and stage techniques. George A. Hudson has charge of the dramatics program.—Alice Cooper, Secretary.

Canton, Ohio

THESPIANS of Troupe 66 of the Lehman High School opened the year's program of major plays with the successful performance of *Smilin' Through*, on November 21 under the direction of Florence E. Hill, troupe sponsor. The second full-length play of the year, *What a Life*, will be given in April under the sponsorship of the Players Club. The Christmas Season was observed with an impressive performance of *Why the Chimes Rang* given by the Players Club and Choir. Miss Hill writes that her school is celebrating its tenth year of membership in the National Thespian Society. A special project for this year is the revival of plays given during those ten years. An effort is also being made to reach all alumni Thespians, inviting them to attend the current revivals.

Winchester, Ill.

THE fall semester dramatics program at the Winchester High School (Thespian Troupe 594) was highlighted with a successful performance of the comedy, *The Tin Hero*, presented by the junior class on November 14 under the direction of Loretta C. Glossop. Another extremely popular event of the fall was the Thespian sponsored production of the comedy, *Spirits of Parade*, on November 6. The next dramatics performance scheduled for this season will be the one-act, *Where Is My Wandering Boy Tonight*, scheduled for February 11 with the play being sponsored by the dramatics club.—Marilyn Northrop, Secretary.

Plays for School Production

THE STRANGE HOUSE

By Carl Astrid

An electrifying and breath-taking mystery play! Intermingled in this grand thriller are a host of scenes of good, clean fun and hilarity. Every part a good one. 4 m., 7 f. 75¢. (Royalty, \$10.00)

LIFE OF THE PARTY

By Marriane and Joseph Hayes

An unusual and worthwhile play by the authors of "And Came the Spring" and "Come Rain or Shine." Studious daughter Jean flings off her glasses and becomes the life of the party! 7 m., 10 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

THE RICH FULL LIFE

By Vina Delmar

A new Broadway release highly recommended for Schools and Little Theatres. "A drama of dignity, sense, and value." N. Y. *World-Telegram*. 3 m., 6 f. 85¢ (Royalty, \$35.00)

SPRING GREEN

By Florence Ryerson and Colin Clements

Most often produced by Thespian-Affiliated Schools during the 1944-45 season. Another funny play by the authors of the outstanding *Ever Since Eve* and *June Mad*; about a boy whose father doesn't understand him and a girl whose mother understands her only too well. 8 m., 7 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

ANGEL STREET

By Patrick Hamilton

After three solid years on Broadway this Victorian thriller is now available in certain territories. 2 m., 3 f. (2 policemen). 85¢. Restricted in a very few places. (Royalty, where available, quoted on application.)

SLICE IT THIN

By Al Moritz and Ed. Heghinian

This Blackfriars Guild success in New York is concerned with the Coleman family and its uproarious entanglement with Hollywood. 5 m., 5 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

SUDDENLY IT WAS MAY

By Bonita Barkley

A comedy of college life that will win the entertainment pennant. It may be presented as a musical or as a straight comedy. Special places are designated in the manuscript where various specialties may be introduced. 4 m., 8 f. (Extras if desired). Mod. Cost. 75¢. (Royalty, \$15.00)

TEN LITTLE INDIANS

By Agatha Christie

It's a fine specimen of the art of writing really good mystery plays. The excitement and carnage never let up until the final curtain. 8 m., 3 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$50.00)

COME OVER TO OUR HOUSE

By Marriane and Joseph Hayes

A new play compounded of a mixture of comedy lines, fast and farcical situations, and a worthwhile theme. A clever, swift, and funny show ideal for high schools. 8 m., 10 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

EVERY FAMILY HAS ONE

By George Batson

The eccentric Reardons, overimpressed with their ancestry, are brought sharply to their senses when cantankerous Grandma and a pretty visiting cousin drag skeletons from the closets, causing comic havoc. 5 m., 7 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

UNCERTAIN WINGS

By Robert Hill and Floyd Crutchfield

A high school comedy whose events are handled realistically from the attitude of the high school people themselves. The dialogue is youthful and sparkling. 4 m., 5 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

THE FIGHTING LITTLES

Adapted by Caroline Francke

Booth Tarkington's latest hit presents the delightful and likeable Little family. A vociferous and fumbling parent provides many laughs. Young romances offer amusement and a touch of sentiment. 5 m., 10 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

BLITHE SPIRIT

By Noel Coward

From a very novel situation Noel Coward has fashioned a play which is hilarious as only a Coward farce can be. The *New York Sun* stated: "Mr. Coward has never, I think, been happier in his inventions or more adept." 2 m., 5 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$50.00)

QUIET SUMMER

By Marriane and Joseph Hayes

A new play by the authors of *And Came The Spring*, *Life of the Party*, *Come Rain or Shine*, *Come Over to Our House*. In cheerful, swift and humorous manner, youngsters Pamela and Sonny help Uncle Jimmie win his election. 8 m., 10 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

TWO'S A CROWD

By Douglas F. Parkhurst

Another heart-warming and hilarious comedy by the author of *But Fair Tomorrow*. During mother's absence, Dick, Patricia, and Dorothy turn the house into a tourist home. Mystery and fun build to a riotous climax. 8 m., 9 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

IT'S SPRING AGAIN

By George Batson

By the author of *Every Family has One* and *The Doctor Has A Daughter*. Anything and everything does happen in the fabulous Ford household. In fact, the new maid refuses to believe that she has not wandered into an insane asylum. 7 m., 6 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

THE MOON MAKES THREE

By Aurand Harris

Sixteen year old Marsy pretends she doesn't mind playing the wallflower, but Grandma knows better. She sends Marsy off to the ball in true Cinderella fashion where she meets her Prince Charming who loses his shoe and the fun begins. 7 m., 8 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

THE BEES AND THE FLOWERS

By Frederick Kohner and Albert Mannheimer

A brand new rollicking comedy about marriage and adolescence is now available. "Real bright dialogue . . . amusing and soundly written." N. Y. *Daily News*. 5 m., 6 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$35.00)

PARLOR STORY

By William McCleery

A witty and provocative comedy telling of a liberal professor of journalism and his clash with a reactionary publisher. Of special interest to College and Little Theatres. 6 m., 4 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$35.00)

SOMETHING ALWAYS HAPPENS

By Alice Thomson and Velma Royton

Three aspiring, but unemployed, young actresses decide to open a restaurant in their own apartment. A series of mishaps and gay and hilarious comedy follow. 6 m., 8 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$25.00)

I LIKE IT HERE

By A. B. Shiffren

A brand-new provocative, comedy. Willie Kringle is a refugee who likes it here well enough to set busily about making the ideals of democracy work. 6 m., 3 f. 85¢. (Royalty, \$35.00)

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Members of Thespian Troupe 776 of The American College for Girls, Cairo, Egypt. Kathryn Ogilvie, founder and sponsor of the troupe, is seated third from the left in the front row. Thespians shown in the picture are Ida Benjamin, Mary Chadban, Phoebe Habib, Mona Kamal, Isis Kelada, Wadad Stamboulia, Leila Wahba, and Odette Yedid. Troupe 776 is the first chapter of The National Thespian Society established in a foreign country.

Thespian Report from Egypt

By WADAD STAMBOULIA

*Secretary, Thespian Troupe 776,
The American College for Girls,
Cairo, Egypt*

THE news of our being accepted as Troupe No. 776 of The National Thespian Society was received with great joy. We all love dramatics, and this is a wonderful opportunity for demonstrating and improving our abilities. At present we have only eight members, but we are looking forward to the time when our troupe will become larger. When we read in the pamphlet on Thespian rules that eight was the minimum number for organizing of a troupe, we had a good laugh, and breathed a sigh of relief.

Our formal initiation took place in May. Kathryn Ogilvie, our sponsor, administered the oath before a large group of the college girls. Something like this is unique in our part of the world.

And now something about our school life. Our chapel, Dales Hall, is quite large. It seats approximately 700 people. We are very fortunate in having a Hammond organ in the

Hall. It is a delight both to play it and to listen to it. Pianos in our college are numberless. We bump into one in every corner. Dales Hall is used for various activities. Our morning chapel service is held there daily. All plays and programs are given there. Indeed, many of the alumnae have their weddings in Dales Hall. The stage is very large. It has all the curtains and drops needed for acting—blue velour front curtain, and large side wings.

The plays produced at our school are in three languages—Arabic, English, and French. On a program sponsored by the Alumnae Association last spring, we Thespians presented two one-act plays, *MADNESS IN TRIPLE TIME*, and *THE OPENING OF A DOOR*.

The former of these is the story of triplets who are dying to act. One thinks she is Juliet; another, Garbo; and the third, Minnie Ha Ha. Quite appropriate for new Thespians. The alumnae agreed that *THE OPENING OF A DOOR* was better than Hollywood. On the same program we had an Armenian National dance presented by Armenian girls in the school, and a Pharaonic dance presented by some of the Egyptian girls. International programs are not difficult for us to assemble,



A group of Egyptian students in a Pharaonic dance at the American College for Girls, Cairo, Egypt.

SOMETHING NEW IN THEATRE

SOMETHING new and different is afoot in Denver's theatre world. Under the leadership of the Denver Art Museum, community theatre interests are banding together to form a new museum department, namely a Theatre Arts Division. The new department will be the first of its kind in the country in that it will encompass all the various aspects of the historic and contemporary theatre.

This new Theatre Arts Division got under way this January with a special Exhibition of Theatre Arts scheduled to run January 18 through February 29. The exhibition has been assembled from museums, universities, private collectors, and theatre and film companies throughout the country under the supervision of the curator, Dr. Campton Bell, who is head of the School of Theatre at The University of Denver.

The exhibition will include costumes, model stage sets, models of historic theatres such as the Globe, and the Drury Lane; demonstrations of stage-lighting effects; a collection of dramatic and ceremonial masks; a display from the film industry including film strips, props, costumes, and original stage designs; a Central City collection including designs for the famous mountain festivals by Robert Edmond Jones, and David Onslager; a section on puppetry; and the Museum of Modern art exhibition, "World of Illusion."

During the exhibition period, the Museum will also present a Theatre Arts Festival to augment the exhibition material. The festival program will include a series of outstanding films of an experimental type, a lecture series, and theatrical demonstrations.

as we have eighteen nationalities in our school.

We present two major French plays yearly. Lately, our plays have been by the French comedian, Moliere, as his plays are suitable for our purposes. Arabic plays are presented every few months.

Every opportunity is given us for coming into contact with outstanding actors and actresses. Dr. Helen Martin, our head mistress, or members of the staff are always ready to take us to the Opera House when there is anything worth seeing. Last year we did not have any English acting. We had, however, French comedy, Italian opera, and a Rumanian operetta. We have read in American publications that you have had both John Gielgud and Donald Wolfit. We also were fortunate in having Mr. Gielgud and Donald Wolfit the year before. They both presented Shakespearean plays in Cairo.

We spent some time last spring in learning how to apply stage make-up. Our supply of make-up is more than ample, thanks to the American Red Cross, which left us two boxes full when they closed out in Cairo.

Our supply of costumes is excellent. At a moment's notice, we can pull something from our cupboards and, by putting some loose ends together, we can make something really good. Indeed, if necessary, we bring a dressmaker into the school to outfit us.

Our adviser for last year and founder of our Troupe, Kathryn Ogilvie, is no stranger to the Thespians, as she sponsored a chapter in East Liverpool, Ohio, before coming to Cairo.

We might add that we think we will have to do something about the word "national" in the name of The National Thespian Society. Our troupe in Egypt makes the Society "international". We hope to be followed by many other troupes outside of your country.

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Davenport, Iowa

THE dramatics department of the Davenport High School (Troupe 510) opened its season in the fall with the all-school play, *Stage Door*, given on October 24, 25. As a reward for their outstanding work, members of the cast and production staff visited the University of Iowa Little Theatre where they witnessed a production of *The Late George Apley*. At the time of this writing six one-act plays were in rehearsal under the direction of advanced students. The plays were: *Antic Spring*, *Common Clay Courtroom Scene*, *Happy Journey*, *Write Me a Love Scene*, *Red Flannels*, and *Sugar and Spice*. Dramatics students have given two radio programs so far this season, and each week a student announcer gives the school news over a local radio station. Plays for this spring call for an evening of one-act plays in February, a formal Thespian initiation in the spring, and the senior class play in May. Dramatics directors this season are Florence Clark, troupe sponsor, and Mae Elma Tornquist.

Torrington, Conn.

THE Melpothalian Dramatics Club of the Torrington High School (Troupe 611) sponsored two extremely popular performances of *The Fighting Littles* on November 6, 7, with Ethel L. Johnson directing. The fall term also included the production of the following one-act plays, sponsored by Thespians and Dramatics Club members: *Wampum*, *Palm of Thanksgiving*, *There's Something* (radio play), and *I've Got To Tell You*. Meetings of the dramatics groups this season have been given to the study of Shakespearean

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plays, with particular emphasis on *Othello*, and the Greek plays, including *Antigone*, *Medea* and *The Clouds*. Miss Johnson is sponsor for troupe 611.—Romana Gaioni, Secretary

Trenton, N. J.

THE season's dramatics program at the Cathedral High School (Troupe 710) began with a popular production of the *Red Mill*, November 23, 24, 25, sponsored by the Music Department and all dramatics organizations in school. Other events of the fall term which drew considerable attention were the assembly programs for Rededication Week offered in September in connection with the visit of the Freedom Train in Trenton. Much time has been devoted this season to radio work, with dramatics students taking a prominent part in radio forums presented over local stations. The dramatics program is under the direction of Sister Mary Anselm.

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Sylvania, Ohio

ANOTHER outstanding program of dramatic productions is being sponsored this season at the Burnham High School (Troupe 467) under the direction of Margaret C. Fairchild. The Speech Department's production of *Come Over to Our House* on October 17 marked the opening of major productions. Choral and Speech groups presented *Child Jesus* in observance of the Christmas Season. The calendar of one-acts announced for the year includes *Angel Child*, *By Special Request*, *His First Shave*, *The Phantom Gentlemen*, *All American Boy*, *Child Wonder*, and *Bobby Sox Brigade*. Particular interest has been shown by students in the study of radio and television and the opportunities these fields provide for employment. Dramatics students have also devoted some time to the study of actors and stages of yesterday and today.—Nancy Beveridge, Secretary

Eugene, Oregon

LARGE and enthusiastic audiences saw the two performances of the farce-comedy, *Stray Cats*, given on December 5, 6 at the Eugene High School with members of Thespian Troupe 750 sponsoring the production. The play was directed by troupe sponsor Esther Hettinger. Leads were played by Donna Vanderbilt and Jack Collard. Another interesting event of the fall term dramatics season was the appearance of the Shakespearean actor, Charles N. Lum, who presented a number of characters from various popular classic plays. Dramatics students are at present looking forward to the conference scheduled for February 13, 14 at the University of Oregon. This gathering will bring together a number of directors and students from several western states.

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Hampton, Va.

AN outstanding event of the fall term at the Hampton High School (Troupe 300) was the production of Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* on November 20, 21, with the play being sponsored by the Garrick Dramatics Club. Thespian sponsor Bristow Hardin Jr. directed. Students who appeared in leading roles were: Bill Walton, Jean Roberts, Charles Cole, Ann Curtis, Ann Darling, Eroman Palmore, and Bob Allen.—Dorothy L. Parkinson, Secretary

Youngstown, Ohio

TWO well-received performances of the comedy, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, under Thespian sponsorship on October 15, 16, marked the opening of major plays at the Rayen School (Thespian Troupe 479) with Lucille Lee as director. Thespians and dramatics club members presented the one-acts, *The Last Christmas*, and *Rumpelstiltskin* in observance of the Christmas Season. At least two members of the dramatics organizations attend each of the productions staged by the Youngstown Players.—Donna Voss, Secretary

Fall River, Mass.

THE annual performance of original plays by the Durfee Dramatics Club was given this season on November 7 under the direction of Barbara Wellington, with the playbill consisting of *Johnny on the Spot*, by Marilyn Cohen; *Ridi Pagliacci*, by Veronica Stone; *The Maid of Domremy*, by Stuart Boardman, and *Pearl's Perils*, by Jay S. Silowitz. Among those who assisted Miss Wellington with the production of these original one-acts were Audelio Roderigues, Sam Pollack, Lew Nadien, Rochelle Lubinsky, Jon Corea, and Dolores Curt. Fred A. Smith acted as Master of Ceremonies.

Webster Groves, Mo.

THE first major plays of the current school season at the Webster Groves High School (Thespian Troupe 191) are productions of the Advanced Dramatics Classes under the direction of Roberta Seibert. The first of these plays, *Our Hearts Were Young and Gay*, was given on October 14-18. The second full-length play, *First Lady*, was offered on December 3-6, while the third play, *Years Ago*, is scheduled for February 24-28. Thespians are giving special attention this season to their newspaper, THE THESPIAN PROMPT BOOK.—Nancy Hill, Secretary

Davenport, Iowa

THE current season of dramatics productions at the Immaculate Conception Academy (Thespian Troupe 654) opened with the production of two original plays given in October, *Mother Clarke*, and *Welcome Home Harrigan*. The fall semester also included the presentation of three one-act plays, *Summons of Sarel*, *Sob Stuff*, *What Are You Going to Wear?*, and the operetta *Gondoliers*, presented in January under the joint sponsorship of the Glee Club and dramatics students. The highlight of the fall term was the drama clinic held on November 15 which was attended by a number of dramatics students. The program included a performance of *A Bell for Adano* by the St. Ambrose College Players. Sister Mary Angelita, B.V.M. has charge of dramatics at the Academy.—Joanne Rebmman, Secretary

Sinsinawa, Wis.

THESPIANS and the Choral Society are acting as sponsors for three major dramatic productions this season at the Saint Clara Academy (Troupe 11), with Sister Thomas More, O.P. as director. Thespians offered *The Emperor's New Clothes* on November 22. Thespians and the Choral Society were joint sponsors of a production of *The Holy Night* on December 19. A third production, *Everyman*, is scheduled for March. The spring program also calls for the production of an original comedy based upon Wisconsin material, with the Seniors sponsoring the show. Particular attention is being given this season to the study of make-up, with lectures and laboratory periods held on Saturday. Lighting techniques will be studied next.

Cincinnati, Ohio

THE Seton-Elder Thespians of the Seton High School (Troupe 371) and the Elder High School (Troupe 552) were joint sponsors of two performances of *Ramshackle Inn* presented to capacity audiences on October 24-26, with Sister Carita and the Reverend Robert John Putnick directing. The same drama groups were joint sponsors of a production of *Little Town of Bethlehem* presented on December 12-14. The Seton-Elder Thespians will also sponsor the production of *Likely Story*, in April. Among the one-acts on this season's program at Seton High School are, *Shelved for the Summer*, *Down to Bethlehem* and *The King's Guard*. Dramatics club meetings are given to the study of pantomime, make-up and acting.—Dorothy Huber, Secretary

Omaha, Nebr.

THESPIANS of Troupe 738 opened the current year's dramatics program at the Benson High School with performances of the one-acts, *The Florist Shop* and *The Trysting Place*, in October. In December the Music Department presented *Sally*. The first major play of the year, *Angel Street*, was given three performances in January, with the show being sponsored by the Dramatics Department. The Department will next produce *Julius Caesar*, with the date to be announced. History of the drama, types of plays, and duties of the production staff are among the subjects which are being studied at the dramatics club meetings held this season. Mrs. Dorothy Stevens has charge of dramatics.—Clarine Carlson, Secretary

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They never dreamed that a major crime would take place right next door! The Carstairs young people, led by attractive Dinah, are trying — often with hilarious results — to run the household, while their widowed mother writes mystery stories to support them. Dinah wishes they could find an ideal man to marry mother off to — the others feel that what their mother really needs is a big publicity break on her next novel — so it will be a smash hit. As they rush about — trying to locate the lamb chops — planning the dinner — worrying about their own dates, but, most of all, about their mother — two shots ring out. These shots end the life of a blackmailer and thrust all the Carstairs into a sinister yet fascinating situation. Instantly, the young people realize that here is a chance for the publicity break their mother needs — and when the good-looking police lieutenant appears — and he's a bachelor — then maybe their other problem can be solved, too. In order to keep Bill from solving the mystery in nothing flat, the kids give him false steers as to just when they actually heard the shots. When they find Mr. Sanford, the husband of the murdered woman, hiding, they decide to protect him, though he is Suspect No. 1 to the police. Archie is caught by

the dective sneaking food to Mr. Sandford. Archie pretends that it is his own picnic supper, and to avoid rousing suspicions Archie has to down the food, although he'd just finished polishing off half a maple cake! A number of people are trying to get into the house of the murdered woman, and the three young people are getting worried. They decide to give a party under cover of the noise and excitement enter the sinister house in search of clues. The plan works, and the young people come back with some very valuable clues. Just how valuable they are they soon begin to realize as the clues bring first one then another into the web of entanglements surrounding the mystery of the murdered woman. Their information is so important, that even they themselves are seriously threatened. The excitement mounts swiftly, and in a fast-moving, thrill-packed third act, they courageously face the threat that their prank has turned into, and not only solve the mystery but successfully bring off the romance between their mother and Bill. It's a play that has everything: comedy mystery, romance, fast action, and the best array of parts one could possibly wish for. The great success of the novel on which this play is based will add unusual interest in the community to your production. Price 75¢. Royalty, \$25.00.

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FEBRUARY, 1948



Closing scene from a variety show given last spring at the Hastings, Minn., High School (Thespian Troupe 523) under the direction of Gladys Mickelsen.

Fithian, Ill.

THREE one-act plays were offered to a large audience on November 14 at the Oakwood Township High School (Troupe 62), with the playbill consisting of *Mooncalf Muggford*, *Hugo in a Hurry*, and *Shadow of a Dream*. The program was under the supervision of Ann Ogan, Troupe sponsor. Plans for the spring term call for a production of an operetta in April and the senior class play scheduled for May 7, with the choice of play to be announced. Dramatics students are devoting their meetings to the study of make-up, scenery, and voice. Some attention is also being given to the organization of a Thespian alumni.—*Juanita Hammach*

Dillon, Mont.

LARGE audiences witnessed the performances of *Night Must Fall* given on October 27, 28, 29 and November 7 at the Beaverhead County High School, with the production being sponsored by the senior class under the direction of Troupe sponsor Fred A. Honeychurch. Productions scheduled for this spring will be reported later.—*Donna Carrigan, Secretary*

Wood River, Ill.

THESPIANS are sponsoring all major dramatic productions this season at the Alton-Wood River High School (Troupe 733) under the direction of Lockwood E. Wiley, Regional Director for the State of Illinois. Fall productions were the operetta, *Forest Prince*, given by the Music Department with Thespians assisting with the staging, the Harvest Queen Coronation, the one-act play, *A Wedding*, and two well-received performances of the three-act play, *Lost Horizon*, presented on December 18, 19. Two exchange programs with neighboring Thespian groups are scheduled for early spring. At the time of this writing dramatics students are receiving lessons in character make-up.—*Wande V. Hamilton, Secretary*

Rochester, Minn.

THE performance of the all-school play, *Feathers in a Gale* on October 17 marked the opening of the 1947-48 dramatics season at the Rochester High School (Thespian Troupe 650) with B. E. Moeller as director. In observance of the Christmas Season Thespians presented the pageant, *The Nativity*, on December 18. A unique experience for members of Troupe 650 was their visit backstage at the Civic Auditorium where they inspected the settings for a professional production of *George Washington Slept Here*. Plans at present are being made for entry in the Big Nine Speech Festival to be held in March. Mr. Moeller was appointed in October as Thespian Regional Director for Minnesota.

Houston, Texas

DRAMATICS students of the Milby High School (Thespian Troupe 829) offered a radio program for assembly in October as their first production of the current year. In December Thespians and members of the Masque and Gavel acted as co-sponsors of a program of three one-acts, *Between Trains*, *Murder by Morning*, and *Where is My Wandering Boy Tonight?* Thespians and Quill Scroll members were joint sponsors for the three-act play, *Hot Copy*, on January 16, with Roscoe Bayless as director. At the time of this report plans are being made for a performance of the comedy, *He Who Hesitates*, on February 6, with the senior class as sponsors. Preparations were also being made for a speech-drama festival scheduled for February 16.—*Margaret Hinson, Secretary*

Lake City, Fla.

DRAMATICS events at the Columbia High School during the fall semester were highlighted with the presentation of three one-act plays given by the Speech Class under the direction of Mrs. David J. Rivers. The program consisted of *Life of the Party*, *The Valiant*, and *The Gift*. Simple techniques of acting and the reading of one-act plays are among the activities to which dramatics club meetings are being devoted. Thespians will act as sponsors for a production of the three-act comedy, *The Fighting Littles*, tentatively announced for after the Christmas Season. Plans for this spring call for the production of several one-act plays.—*Al Reese, Secretary*

Findlay, Ohio

MEMBERS of Thespian Troupe 451 are taking a prominent part this season in the dramatics activities sponsored at the Findlay Senior High School, with Wilbur Hall as director. A number of Thespians appeared in the junior class play, *The Adorable Spendthrift*, given on November 13. Thespians are also expected to appear in the school operetta which will be given in April and in the senior class play announced for presentation in May.—*Molly Keller, Secretary*

Evansville, Ind.

MEMBERS of Thespian Troupe 474 of the Francis Joseph Reitz High School were among those who took prominent parts in the presentation of two performances of the comedy, *Foot-Loose*, on November 20, 21, with Mildred Karch directing. The Christmas Season was observed with a performance of the one-act play, *Mary, His Mother*. Dramatics club meetings are given to a study of stage lighting, costuming, play selection, and the organization of a play production. A number of students are attending performances given by the Evansville Little Theatre.—*Walter Prickett, Secretary*

Beverly Hills, Calif.

THREE major plays are announced for this season's dramatics program at the Beverly Hills High School (Troupe 809) under the direction of Florence Kinsey. The senior class offered *You Can't Take It With You* on November 7-8 as the first of these major plays. The second play, *Our Town*, will be given March 12-13 as the All-School play. The third play, *Alice in Wonderland*, will be given on May 1 under sponsoring of the English Department. Four other performances of this play will be given to local elementary schools. Among the one-acts given this season are *Little Women* and *He Ain't Done Right* by Nell. Music and dramatics students have cooperated in producing *Salt Water Daffy*, an original music show, and Christmas play, *Why the Chimes Rang*.—*Eleanor Newman, Secretary*

Cleveland, Ohio

THREE full-length plays are included in this season's dramatics program at the Brooklyn High School (Troupe 699) with Georgiana Skinner in charge. *But Not Goodbye* was given to an enthusiastic audience on November 20, with the play being sponsored by the Dramatics Club. The same organization will sponsor a production of *The Fettered Lily* on March 19. The third play of the season, *You Can't Take It With You*, will be presented on June 1. Other activities of the year include an intra-school one-act play tournament, participation in the state one-act play festival, and frequent attendance at the Cleveland Playhouse. Subjects which are being studied at the dramatics club meetings include make-up, sound effects, stage lighting, stage design, and play directing.—*Ruth Fowler, Secretary*

Alton, Ill.

AN extremely active group of fourteen Thespians and thirty-five members of the Cadetspians from the dramatics organization at the Western Military Academy (Troupe 397), with Captain Francis Nachtmann as sponsor and director. The 1946-47 season was opened with a successful performance of *Take My Advice* in which three cadets acted female roles. Later in the season the dramatics group presented *The Black Valise* and a musical pageant in observance of the Christmas Season. Two other one-acts, *Allison's Lad* and *Sunset by Slansky*, were also given during the year. For the senior class play, upper-classmen chose *Arsenic and Old Lace* which proved extremely popular with a large audience. So far this season Thespians have given two one-act plays, *Heads He Burns* and *The Still Alarm*. At the time of this writing a Christmas program was in preparation. Plans for the spring dramatics program will be reported later.—*Jay Heyman, Secretary*

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

THESPIAN Troupe. 468 of the Franklin School is enjoying a full schedule of activities this season. The year opened with two performances of the senior class play, *A Date With Judy*, on November 14, 15, with Ethel Roberg directing. On January 16 Thespians presented the one-act play, *Are We Dressing?* at the Community Playhouse. This spring Thespians will enter the one-act, *Triumph in Ashes*, in the City Play Festival Plans are also being made for the Troupe to enter a play in the State Drama Festival sponsored by the University of Iowa. The closing event of the season will be the production of the senior class play, *Bottoms Up*, under the sponsorship of the June graduating class. Throughout the year Thespians are taking a prominent part in all phases of dramatics work offered by the school.—*Virginia Mansfield, Secretary*

Grand Ledge, Mich.

DRAMATICS projects reported so far this season by the Grand Ledge High School (Thespians Troupe 536) include two popular performances of *The Whole Town's Talking*, presented on November 21, 22 under the direction of Miriam Ellis, the presentation of three one-act plays, *Orchids for Marie*, *Hearts*, and *The Pot Boiler*, and attendance at performances given by the Lansing Civic Players.

Clayton, Mo.

AN outstanding event of the current dramatics season at the Clayton High School (Thespians Troupe 322) was the production of *Feathers in a Gale* given in December under the direction of Blandford Jennings. Tentatively scheduled for production soon will be a penthouse show of *The Divine Flora*. For third major show of the year Mr. Jennings is considering *January Thaw* with the production set for May.

Barackville, W. Va.

MEMBERS of Thespians Troupe 450 of the Barackville High School presented a successful performance of *Let Me Come Back* in observance of National Education Week. On December 12 the senior class followed with a performance of the three-act comedy, *Come Rain or Shine*, with major parts played by seniors who are officers of Thespians Troupe 450. At the present time plans are being made for the Troupe's entry in the District Drama Festival to be held at the Fairmont State College on March 20. The season will close with the junior class play this spring. Four senior Thespians are expected to rate as "Honor Thespians" by the close of the year. The dramatics program is under the direction of Lewis W. Hall.—*Cora Jo Horton, Secretary*

New London, Wis.

THE senior class production of *A Date With Judy* on November 20, with Marcella Hoeffs as director, marked the opening of the 1947-48 play season at the Washington High School (Thespians Troupe 119). The second full-length play of the year, *Ask Me Another*, will be given by Thespians on February 18, with Troupe sponsor Dorothy L. Edkins directing. The current season also includes performances of the following one-acts, given before student audiences: *One of Us*, *Stout-Hearted Freddie*, *Shock of His Life*, and *Wildcat Willie Gets Brain Fever*. The presentation of one-acts at this school is an annual event sponsored by Thespians. Each class presents a play before the student body with the performances judged by four members of the faculty. Players are selected, cast, and directed by students. Points are awarded to the classes participating towards the "Spirit Cup" which is presented at the close of the year to the class rated the most active.—*Donna Rae DeGroff, Secretary*

What's New Among Books and Plays

The purpose of this department is to keep our readers posted on the latest theatre and drama publications available from publishers. Mention or review of a book or play in this department does not constitute an endorsement by Dramatics Magazine. Opinions expressed are those of the reviewer only.

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Columbia University Press,
New York, N. Y.

Revolution in American Drama, by Edmond M. Gagey. 1947. 293 pages. Price, \$3.75. The author's Preface tells us that this is a factual summary of the American drama of the past thirty years — a panoramic survey, "allowing the playwrights to speak through their plays and critical dicta." The book opens with a chapter, "The Great White Way — 1912-1917" in which a number of plays of pre-World War I such as *Pollyanna*, *Believe Me? Xantippe*, and *The Thirteenth Chair* are discussed. An entire chapter is given to Eugene O'Neill. Then come chapters on "Poetry and Imagination," "The World We Live In," and "Comedy — American Plan," with the author classifying the plays of the past quarter of a century under broad headings. *Revolution in American Drama* is an extremely readable book which has strong appeal for all who follow the theatre. Perhaps a better title for the book would have been "Evolution of the American Drama", but this is a minor item. Mr. Gagey's book makes an excellent addition to the drama library.—*Ernest Bavely*

Rutgers University Press,
New Brunswick, N. J.

You Can Talk Well, by Richard C. Reager. 194. 312 pages. Price, \$2.50. This book has come in for its share of criticism from some of our authorities on Speech, mainly because the author often presents guaranteed formulas for effective speaking. On the other hand, the book is free of the usual high-sounding "science and mystery" found in other books on the subject, and to this reader that feature of Professor Reager's book comes as a welcomed relief. Causes of speech ineffectiveness, background requirements for effective speaking, speech organization and plan, delivery, voice, and various speech situations come in for their due share of discussion. Especially recommended for those who want to improve their ability to speak in public without attending formal classes or courses.—*Ernest Bavely*

Heuer Publishing Company,
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

People Are Talking is a three act comedy of youth, by Albert Johnson. 8 m., 7 w. Every adolescent boy who has been pushed this way and that by his family will appreciate the situation in which Junior Kennedy finds himself. His father wishes that Junior be a scientist; his mother, an eagle scout; his aunt, an actor; one sister, a singer, another, a baseball player; his uncle an insurance man. Is

it any wonder that Junior revolts and runs away? The frantic family is now willing to do anything if only Junior will return. He does (in disguise) and exacts promises that he may lead his own life and even have a new dog. Thru all this runs a counter plot that offers Junior a chance to assert himself. High school groups will like *People Are Talking*. There is contrast in the characters; the action is consistent; the dialog youthful and natural. Directors who are weary of one interior will find the Kennedy's front yard a welcome change. The play is relatively simple so that even inexperienced directors will be able to produce a good show.—*Roberta D. Sheets*

F. S. Croft & Co.
New York, N. Y.

First Steps in Acting, by Samuel Selden. From beginning to end, the author assumes that the student player is in action, hence the title of the book. Although the book stresses technique, it attempts throughout to give reasons for the methods outlined so that the apprentice actor may be able to see, and feel, clearly what he is trying to do. This point of attack is defensible, in the mind of the author, for experience has convinced him that most failures in acting result from an inability to project dramatically. By all odds, this book is a fine companion volume to a good book on directing, for it tells how to teach an actor to make the moves you have planned seem motivated and dramatic. Another excellent feature of the book is the considerable space devoted to discussion and exercises covering the four "fundamental movements", designed to utilize both the pantomimic and vocal phases of an actor's performance. Also eighteen dramatic scenes have been included for practice. One fine feature of the book is that exercises and discussions in the book have been cross-indexed for easy reference and clarity of the principle outlined.—*Robert Ensley*

Ivan Bloom Hardin Company
3806 Cottage Grove Avenue,
Des Moines 11, Iowa

Happy the Bride, by Venetia Orr. A humorous monologue in which the bride soliloquizes rather cynically on the events of her wedding. Just as the newly wedded pair left the altar there was a momentary blackout which caused a startling revelation when the lights came on.

Rock-a-Bye, Baby, a humorous selection, by Maybelle Hinton Osborne. Apparently, three kidnapers have let their victim escape. Their discussion over the loss of the baby is interrupted by the return of the man whose carelessness has let the "kid" escape, bringing the runaway with him, a baby elephant!

Dal I'm Ze Countess! a humorous reading, by Ronald E. Schulz. Two Russian "Countesses" seek the money for the endorsement of the merits of "Squelch's Tomato Juice". When the representative leaves they drop their accents and divide the money.

Sara Crew Advertises, a humorous reading by Grace Stuart Reid. Two sisters who have inherited a farm without the money to keep it up shame their uncle into paying a fair price for it by selling advertising to be painted on the roof of the house.

Good Readers are Rare, an amusing impersonation. A class of children struggle through the oral reading assignment, "Grap's Elegy in a Country Churchyard."—*Helen Movius*

**Samuel French, 25 West 45th Street,
New York, N. Y.**

Aurlia Bridge From Hemlock Ridge, a modern comedy in three acts, by Bert Stoner. 3 m., 6 w. Royalty free for first performance. Aurlia Bridge pays her first visit to the big city.

Cruise of Death, a mystery play in three acts, by John Rand. 6 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$10. The setting is the lounge aboard the S. S. *Southern Star*, a cruise ship bound for the Caribbean.

The Kid Himself, a comedy of youth in three acts, by James Reach. 5 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$10. Skippie Alvin and his loyal side-kick, Jojo Jones, have the best intentions in the world, but somehow they're always getting into trouble.

Say Uncle, a comedy in three acts, by John Rand. 4 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10. The story of Herriet Kent, a widow, and her three daughters and one son.

Made in Heaven, a play in three acts, by Hagar Wilde. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty quoted upon application. First performed in October, 1946, at the Henry Miller's Theatre, New York City, as a John Golden production.

Loco, a comedy in two acts, by Dale Eunson and Katherine Albert. 5 m., 7 w. Waldo Brewster is not understood by his family. First performed at the Biltmore Theatre, New York City, in October, 1946. Presented by Jed Harris.

The Bees and the Flowers, a comedy by Frederick Kohner and Albert Mannheimer. 4 m., 7 w. Royalty quoted upon application. First performed at the Cort Theatre, New York City, in September, 1946. One set with six scenes.

**Row, Peterson & Co., 1911 Ridge Avenue,
Evanston, Ill.**

Junior Prom, a farce-comedy in three acts, by James F. Stone. 6 m., 6 w. Royalty quoted upon application. The usual excitement attendant on the approaching Junior Prom has struck the Haines Household and friends of the younger members. But, when Prom night comes, the house is quarantined for measles, with a queer assortment of characters inside who have been drawn there with the mistaken idea that Mr. Haines is a psychiatrist. Near riot is the result. Although it is along the usual family-comedy lines, the hilarious farce-pace of the latter part of the play makes it seem different, and easily usable by high school groups.—Virginia Leeper

Three Blind Dates, a comedy in three acts by Bettye Knapp. 3 m., 7 w. Royalty quoted upon application. The plot concerns the attempt of Katy Ellis to interest in girls her over-serious, studious-minded brother, who is totally absorbed in a scientific experiment while home on vacation from college. Roles easy to cast make this a play within the range of any high school group.—Virginia Leeper

**Banner Play Bureau
San Francisco 2, California**

That Face Is Familiar, a farce in three acts, by Kenneth Weston Turner. The play deals with a feud between Mrs. Harcourt and Mr. Caldwell. The sons of the families are friends. Two young sons are room mates at boarding school, and the two older ones are drawn together by a love for the theatre. James Harcourt is at home when the play opens painting a picture of the Dutchess to please his mother, and wroking on scene designs to please himself. Harrington Caldwell comes to talk over the design and an actor friend also arrives. Mrs. Harcourt suddenly decides to return, so James presses his friends into service as butler and secretary. The Dutchess and her daughter stay for a visit and the Dutchess wonders where she has seen these faces. Along with this intrigue there is a burglar scare, some

amateur sleuthing and much confusion. The play is for adult actors and adult audiences. It would be a good choice for a community group. The editing is excellent and directions most helpful.—Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets

**Baker's Plays, 178 Tremont St.,
Boston 11, Mass.**

A Cloud of Witnesses, an Easter play in one act with prologue and postlude, by Esther Willard Bates. 3-5 m., 6-8 w., choir, extras. Royalty \$5.00. A service planned for use in a church or auditorium, as an Easter message. The happy spirits of three devoted church members have returned, unseen and unheard, except by each other and the audience, to participate in the Resurrection Day service. They convey beautifully and mysteriously their knowledge of immortality. A chair, or at least a trio of voices, and piano or organ music are necessary to fulfill the beauty of the service. Best suited for advanced groups and adults.—Jean E. Donahay

He Is Not Here! He Is Risen!, an Easter service in four scenes, also contains *Kindling of the Holy Fire* and *Service for the Consecration of Grounds for the Easter Garden*, by Paul Nagy. Jr. 9-15 m., 5-10 w., extras. Purchase of copies for each speaking part. These services are for groups or communities which have annual outdoor Easter services. There are detailed diagrams for both outdoor and indoor presentations. The first service is based on the Biblical story of the Resurrection Day and is in four scenes. It is primarily for an outdoor sunrise worship, but can be adapted to indoor use. The second service is a dramatization of an ancient legend, the basis of which is the theme of Christ as the Light of the World. Advanced high school or community groups looking for the beautiful and different service will find these suitable.—Jean E. Donahay

Northwestern Press

2200 Park Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Show Must Go On, a comedy in three acts, by Addison Augler. 7 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10.00. Robert Stanley, the father, has an aversion to the stage so has forbidden his daughter, Ruth, to participate in high school dramatics. She has now graduated and is rehearsing for a community play. Father at first is angry, then to all appearances, relents. Really, he has bribed the director to ruin the play and queer Ruth as an actress. The day is saved by a visiting uncle from Hollywood who takes over and produces a good show. The play is within the capabilities of high school actors, but the father's fear that one play will start his daughter toward Hollywood, seems a bit far-fetched.—Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets

Sparkling Sixteen, a comedy in three acts, by Olive Price. 5 m., 7 f. Royalty \$25.00. One interior. Sandra has been to visit Cicley James in Philadelphia and the home town seems pretty small; mother, a bit dowdy; and Prof. Briggs entirely lacking in finesse. Cecily has decided what Sandra needs to give her glamour is a father. They select an eligible bachelor and begin to plan a romance for mother. The plot back-fires but Sandra does acquire a father and a background. The play is wholesome, realistic, and entirely satisfactory. The characters are cleverly drawn, the dialog good.—Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets

**The Play Club, Inc.
Elizabethtown, Pa.**

After All It's Spring, a three act comedy, by Frederick G. Walsh. 7 m., 8 w. Royalty, \$25.00. It is spring and Mrs. Whitaker is seized with the desire to do some house cleaning and redecorating; Mr. Whitaker, to win the fishing trophy; Granny to take a tour; Alice to marry Bob Davis; and Young Mary to meet a visiting movie star. Mother is handicapped by lack of funds; father by his rival's success with hook and line; Granny and Gramp's desire to stay put; Alice by father's opposition to Bob; Mary by a persistent boy friend. But fate,

in the person of Gramp's old army buddy, steps in. Alice gets her beau, Martha gets her furniture, Pa wins his contest and Granny her trip around the world. It's spring. There are some clever turns but the plot is obvious and the characters drawn with broad strokes. This reviewer wishes some dramatist writing for youthful audiences would find a sympathetic, understanding father to delineate.—Roberta Dinwiddie Sheets

Greenberg: Publisher

201 East 57th St., New York 22, N. Y.

Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers, a play in one act, by Adrian Scott. 2 m., 2 w., 1 child. Royalty, \$10.00. This play is based upon the well-known Grace Bedel incident. It will be recalled that Grace wrote Abraham Lincoln, suggesting that he grow a beard. This well written dramatization has Lincoln calling on Grace at her home, while her parents are at the station waiting for the Presidential train to arrive. Drama groups wanting to do something different and worth while in observance of Lincoln's birthday will find this play an excellent choice. Easy to stage.—Ernest Bavelly

Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

6 East 39th St., New York 16, N. Y.

The Whole World Over, a comedy in two acts, by Konstantine Simonov, translator and re-written for the American stage by Thelma Schnee. 4 w., 7 m., 1 int. Royalty quoted upon application. The setting is in Moscow right after the end of the War. There are, however, no propaganda or political angles. This is a purely domestic comedy in which, with the help of her wise and witty old father, a girl decides what man she wants — and gets him. The theme may seem commonplace, but the high spirits and genuine humor with which it is worked out make this a delightful and heartwarming play, which can be unreservedly commended for high school production.

The Story of Mary Surratt, a play in three acts, by John Patrick (author of *The Willow and I* and *The Hasty Heart*). 2 w., 33 m., 3 int. Royalty quoted upon application. This is a tragedy based on the assumption that Mary Surratt, the one woman convicted and executed following Lincoln's assassination, was innocent and that her trial was a murderous farce motivated by politics. Strongly and movingly written, it should make a powerful production for college and community theatres.

Strange Boarders, a comedy in three acts, by George Batson and Jack Kirkland. 7 w., 8 m., 1 int. Royalty quoted upon application. Cordelia, an attractive spinster of about 35, is living in a ramshackle house on a wharf with her two foster-daughters. In a vague effort to make ends meet, she takes in boarders, principally a retired sea-captain who pays his bills in I.O.U.'s, and a former professor who doesn't pay his at all. To this menage come some gangsters seeking the two women who have double-crossed their boss and fled with \$100,000 stolen from a bank. The women duly arrive, masquerading as prim schoolma'ams; and when the chief gangster himself appears, everything is set for plenty of farcical violence — which ends, of course, with the gangsters in the hands of the police and Cordelia enjoying in anticipation the \$10,000 reward she has earned. All the farce devices of the old Keystone Kops films are here assembled. At least six (the reviewer lost count) of the characters are knocked senseless, at one time or other, with blackjacks, croquet mallets, or whatever instrument comes handy. Each bludgeoning will produce immense hilarity in the audience. This sure-fire show is good for a couple of hundred laughs, and would be a lot of fun for both actors and audience, if you have no objection to a play which, even more than most routine farces, depends for its effects largely on violence and coincidence.—Blandford Jennings

QUIET SUMMER

By MARRIJANE and JOSEPH HAYES

(The authors of **And Came the Spring, Come Rain or Shine, Life of the Party, and Come Over to Our House**)

8 Males, 10 Females. Interior. Modern Costumes.

Like all of the author's previous plays, **Quiet Summer** is a fast-moving, rollicking comedy with an interesting and amusing theme. James Clark, lawyer, has hopes of spending the summer in peace and serenity, concentrating on getting elected president of his country club. He knows that this will be the first step toward winning his race for District Attorney in the fall. But the best laid plans of men who are uncles often go astray. And James is an uncle. His sister, Lillian, and her husband want a summer away from Pamela, 17, and Sonny, 15, so the kids arrive from New York to stay with Uncle Jimmie. In the course of three uproarious acts Uncle Jimmie learns about the younger generation, and he learns to relax. He even wins his election through the inventive and unconventional aid of the kids and the helpers they quickly gather around them. But before these pleasant developments, Pamela and Sonny, working at breakneck speed, get involved in romantic (almost marital) adventures. They all but smash James' happy romance; they turn his home into a combination rumpus-room and campaign headquarters. They manage to learn a few things themselves along their merry way. All this — and more — is presented in a cheerful, swift and humorous manner. It's full of surprises that made the earlier plays by these authors such outstanding successes all over the country. Books, 85 cents. (Royalty, \$25.00.)



SUDDENLY IT WAS MAY!

By BONITA BARKLEY

4 Males, 8 Females. (Extras if desired.) Simple Interior. Modern Costumes

As refreshing as a day in May and just as invigorating, **Suddenly It Was May!** is a gay frolic. Prof. Moss Gresham, a likeable young teacher at Bradford College, is engaged to marry pretty young Avis Terrant, a niece of the Dean. Things are going along splendidly for Moss until he receives a visit from his close pal, Barry Boniface. Barry is eloping with a charming young girl named Peaches White. Peaches faints dead away. When she regains consciousness, she thinks it is to Moss that she is engaged to be married. Moss' real fiancée, Avis Terrant is horrified to hear that her "one and only" is engaged to somebody else. Before she recovers from that blow, she picks up a newspaper and sees an announcement of Moss' forthcoming marriage to Torchey Shapiro, a "blues" singer. Moss is forced to leave Bradford College. It requires some doing to reinstate himself in his former position and straighten things out with Avis. He finally succeeds, and the final curtain finds everybody in a happy mood. (This comedy of college life may be presented with music or as a straight comedy; places are designated where various specialties may be introduced.) Books 75 cents. (Royalty, \$15.00.)

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3-Act Comedy; 9 w, 6 m; 1 int., by Perry Clark. A sparkling, zestful new comedy that's about the favorite and universal afterschool pastime—Baby-Sitting. If ever a play was a "natural," this is it! All the best ingredients are here—the raiding of ice-boxes—boy-friends pushing in and making themselves at home—hanging over the telephone—maneuvering over dates—all the humor, action, and predicaments that go to make an outstanding comedy hit!



Story Every trouble that ever happened to a baby-sitter happens to Carrie tonight! She thought she was all through with baby-sitting and that she has a wonderful date with Bob all set. She's spent her "sitting-savings" on a beautiful new outfit, and even got her father to loan them the car for the evening — what a surprise for Bob when she appears! Poor Bob. He can hardly force out the words to tell her that he's under strict parental orders to break this date! His folk have cracked down because he gets in so late from his dates with Carrie. They don't realize that Bob has been staying up to see her home safely from her sitting jobs. Now they've even forced Bob to make another date with Eunice! in despair, Bob cries, "Parents have too much power over people!" But before Carrie can go, there's a sudden emergency at Bob's house. His folks have an important engagement for the evening, and now their baby-sitter calls and can't come. The folks are desperate, for the *must* leave. Then Carrie steps forward. Despite her feelings, she offers to take the job. The parents reluctantly accept. Bob is dumbfounded at Carrie, but she quickly points out that this is her *only* chance to make a good impression on Bob's folks. She'll show them what a nice responsible girl she is, and what a good

manager too. She didn't reckon with the little devil she's being left to watch! First, Junior gets Carrie suspected of twisting his arm—and then throws the blame on her for breaking a window with a slingshot! Bob's parents are even more angry with her, and she's so flustered that she uses Father's new white silk muffler as the little girl's diaper! The parents are in a rage, and it doesn't seem possible that more could go wrong. But then Junior swallows what might have been a mushroom, or what might have been a *toadstool*! Carrie must act quickly, just in case, and she does—she forces every antidote in the medical book down the violently protesting Junior's throat! When the others burst in on this scene of the determined Carrie and shouting Junior, they're convinced Carrie is trying to murder the little darling! Carrie's harried attempt to clear this up nearly results in Bob's father losing his job, and even Bob begins to doubt her. Despite your laughter, you can't feel sympathy, too, for Carrie is so human and heartbroken. Then, in fast-paced comedy style, the play builds rapidly to a surprise and happy ending. The date-problems, parents problems, baby-sitting problems of all these young people are solved, and Carrie herself is "riding high." She couldn't be more happy!

Royalty, \$25.00 (Maximum: see basic fee plan) Price 75c

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